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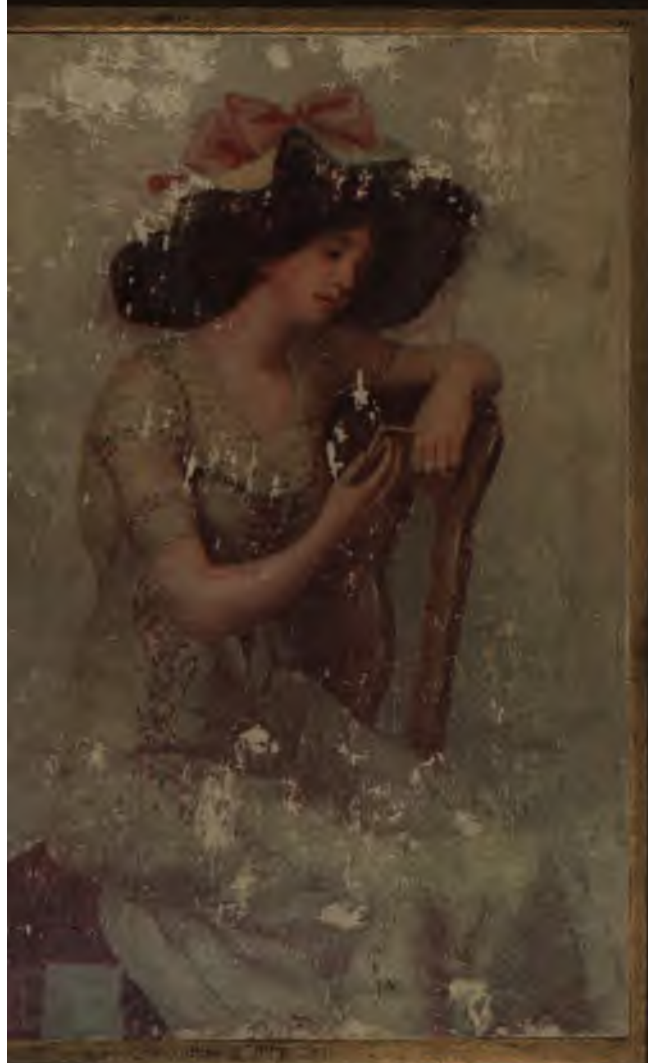
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THE MINANT-CHORD



BY
WARD KIMBALL





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Alice Huntington



THE DOMINANT CHORD

BY
EDWARD KIMBALL

*With a frontispiece in full colour
from a painting by*

WILLIAM BUNTING



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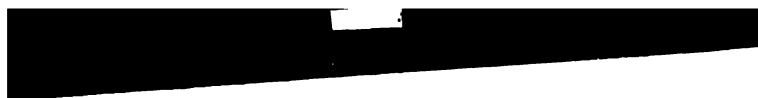
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THE DOMINANT CHORD

CHAPTER I

A MYSTERIOUS CHAUFFEUR

UNQUESTIONABLY Alice Huntington was angry. The sensitive under lip tightly clenched between two rows of white, even teeth, and the small red spot that glowed in her usually pallid cheek, were storm signals which her friends had long since learned to know and recognize as involving the immediate necessity of a change of course, the shortening of sail, and usually a precipitate run for the nearest port of shelter.

As she stood poised upon the topmost step of the marble staircase which led down into the foyer, her opera cloak gathered loosely about her tall, graceful figure, and her proud features compressed in an expression of in-

ward and suppressed annoyance, she in all verity looked the haughty aristocrat which the sensational journals, that persistently and insistently chronicled her goings and comings, delighted to depict her.

Her appearance in the foyer at once injected a spirit of life and activity into the attachés. The second act was drawing to its close and the lobbies were deserted by all, save a few curious loungers. To the attendant who approached, inquiring if she wished her car called, she gave a preoccupied nod of assent, and soon the signal for the Huntington equipage went echoing down the long line of broughams, automobiles and theatre busses which stretched along Broadway, and whose various ramifications were lost in the semi-darkness of the side streets which led into that thoroughfare.

After a few moments, which must have seemed unnecessarily long to the lady in waiting, a big, black automobile shot out of the darkness and slid smoothly and noiselessly up to the entrance. The door was thrown open by an attendant. The usual

crowd of curious onlookers pressed closer. There was a slam, a cry of "All right!" and the car, with its burden of haughty femininity, rolled away into the darkness.

"Henri!" The tense voice which vibrated through the speaking tube was evidently seeking an outlet for some inward emotion. "Is it absolutely necessary that you keep me standing so long in a public place to be stared and gawked at by everybody? I wish in future when your number is called you would be more prompt in responding. You may take me home and return afterwards for the rest of the party."

The chauffeur did not seem to be greatly disturbed by this volley of hot shot poured into his ear, but probably to protect himself from a further broadside, before turning back to the steering wheel, a close observer might have seen him deftly insert a plug of what seemed to be absorbent cotton into the bell mouth of the voice tube. This was an excellent device to prevent a repetition of the storm, and indicated originality and imagination on the part of the chauffeur; but

the utility of the small rubber tube to which this plug was attached, and whose other end now rested securely between the lips of the aforesaid individual, was not so apparent.

To insure a proper understanding of what subsequently took place, it may be as well at this point to state that the other end of the voice tube passed through the centre of a heavy, braided rope, and terminated in, and was concealed by, a large silken tassel which depended within easy reach of the occupant of the car.

Having vented a portion of her ill humour on the unfortunate chauffeur, the heiress to the Huntington millions leaned back among the cushions and gave herself up to her more or less pleasant reflections. It had been a detestable evening. The supercritical and cynical comments of the Duke and his ceaseless flow of trivial small talk had grated on her nerves, already frayed and jangled by the innumerable irritations incident to the preparation for a wedding of international importance, and for the first time she wondered dreamily whether the making of this

brilliant match, which would install her as one of the first ladies of Europe, and make her the envy of every marriageable girl in her set, was really worth the price which she was paying for it.

The opera had been "Siegfried," her favourite in the Wagner group, and one which her artistic temperament demanded that she be allowed to enjoy undisturbed. She had borne with the jangling and discordant elements in her box party until about the end of the second act, when the tension had suddenly become too great. Something snapped. In the midst of the weird and magic strains of the fire music she rose suddenly, and without a word of explanation precipitately fled.

She wondered idly whether her party had begun to miss her yet. She wondered whether the Duke really cared enough about her to look for her; she wondered if *she* cared whether he did or not.

The smooth, easy swaying of the car was beginning to exercise a soothing influence on her. Her eyelids seemed to be oppressed by

an unwonted heaviness. The powerful and pervasive odour of the tuberoses in the bouquet holder in front of her seemed to load the atmosphere with a heaviness that was almost palpable. The automobile skidded easily around a corner into a cross street, throwing her gently towards the opposite side of the car. She straightened herself up languidly and indifferently in her seat. The sense of oppression on her bosom increased; a sweet and pungent odour filled her nostrils. The long, dark lashes which veiled her eyes sagged lower and lower toward the waiting cheeks. With a determined effort she tried to throw off the feeling of drowsiness which was overpowering her, but without success.

The automobile slewed swiftly into Fifth Avenue, throwing her back into the corner of the seat. This time she made no effort to recover herself. Her head drooped forward; her whole body relaxed, and, with her face pressed against the silken tassel of the voice tube, she slept.

To one acquainted with the *régime* of the

Huntington establishment, the further movements of the chauffeur might have awakened suspicion. Satisfying himself by a hasty, backward glance into the interior of the car that its movements had ceased to have any immediate interest for its occupant, the individual at the steering wheel turned on more power and shot into another cross street leading over to the east side.

A slight movement among the pile of furs at his feet attracted his attention, but a hasty examination apparently reassured him, for he turned back to the steering wheel and gave it no further notice. The apparatus which had stopped up the speaking tube seemed to have fulfilled its purpose, for it was now withdrawn and dropped skilfully down a catch-basin in passing.

Swinging around another corner, the big machine made its way down town at a speed which would certainly have proved troublesome to a car bearing any other number. The burly, blue-coated guardian of the peace, who was holding the crossing as boldly and impressively as Horatio of old had held the

bridge over the Tiber, saw it bearing down on him like an express train, and instead of arresting its progress forthwith, and thereby depriving the morning papers of the sensation of the season, he watched it shoot by him like a rocket, and disappear down the avenue in a cloud of dust, without other evidence of interest than a benign and tolerant smile.

General Huntington's chauffeur, for pertinent and obvious reasons, made it his business to be on good terms with most of the "motor cops" and crossing officers of the metropolis, and the aforesaid gentlemen likewise, for obvious and satisfactory reasons, were quite willing to be on good terms with General Huntington's chauffeur. Not the least of these reasons was the generally known fact that the General's sideboard contained the finest products of Havana to be found in all the length and breadth of the city, and the wrappers which protected these veritable triumphs of art frequently proved to be of paper which was easily negotiable in the marts of commerce and elsewhere.

Thanks to this happy combination of circumstances and the discretion of the driver, the car made its way rapidly and without interruption down into the lower part of the city, and after traversing several deserted streets stopped before a large warehouse and pier on the lower waterfront.

The chauffeur now alighted, and from beneath the pile of furs at his feet extracted an individual who, so far as livery, leather cap and automobile mask were concerned, might have been his twin brother. This new actor in the scene (if one whose part seemed to be a purely passive one can be called an actor) he propped up into the seat he had just vacated. Next, taking a key from his pocket, he unlocked a small door which gave access to a narrow passageway running down to the pier end between the walls of the warehouse and the edge of the wharf.

There were no vessels tied up in the slip, and the whole place appeared deserted. This aspect of affairs seemed to be satisfactory to the party most concerned, for he returned quickly to the car, and, throwing

open the door, gathered up the unconscious form of the occupant, still wrapped in the voluminous folds of her opera cloak, and drew her forth into the night.

The new driver of the car meanwhile seemed to be completely unconscious of these movements. Perhaps the half tumbler of French brandy, which had been superimposed upon an already extensive and varied collection of liquid refreshments, had tended to discourage an immediate and vivid interest in passing events.

His predecessor gave him no further attention, but, carefully locking the gate behind him, made his way with his burden down the pier to where a ladder, made of heavy cleats spiked to the piling, led down to the water. To descend this, burdened as he was, was a task which required no little strength and adroitness, but it was successfully accomplished, and as the stranger reached the lowermost cleat an electric launch slipped noiselessly out from the inky blackness under the pier and came nosing her way up to the ladder. To deposit his

burden in the bottom of the boat and take his place at the wheel was the work of a moment.

As the launch shot out of the slip into the stream a hoarse hail came over the water from a harbour patrol boat, but with an astonishing burst of speed the little craft darted forward, and, before the guardians of the waterfront could turn their boat in pursuit, she had already disappeared among the labyrinth of shadows of the shipping lying in the stream.



CHAPTER II

A STRANGE AWAKENING

WHEN Alice Huntington opened her eyes the next morning she was immediately conscious of a strangeness in her surroundings. The bed she was lying on was certainly not her own, neither was it customary for her to retire for the night without disrobing. For some moments she lay perfectly quiet trying to collect her senses, slowly and with difficulty piecing together the events of the previous evening. She recalled the box party, the annoyance and irritation which had caused her to desert her friends, and her departure for home in the motor car—there her memory failed her. Her last conscious recollection was of the overpowering perfume of the tuberose and the heavy sense of drowsiness which had descended upon her.

As her groping senses slowly took in her

surroundings, she saw that she was in a small but luxuriously furnished apartment; a chamber, but of a design in furnishing the like of which she had never seen before. There were no windows, the room being lighted by an opaque sheet of glass, which formed the entire ceiling.

The silence was absolute; the roar and rumble of traffic inseparable from the life of a great city was completely stilled, yet the light, filtering through the ceiling, told her that the day was abroad. Silence, deep, enveloping, insistent, seemed to press upon her with an imminent foreboding, a sinister sense of uneasiness and alarm which clogged her thoughts and paralyzed her actions. By straining her ears she fancied at times she could detect the soft, scuffling sound of running water, and the distant musical monotone of machinery in motion, but she could not fix the sound.

Being ordinarily of a self-confident and energetic temperament, no sooner had Alice thoroughly awakened to a sense of the strange and mysterious nature of her sur-

roundings than she started to investigate. Rising hastily, and throwing her opera cloak around her bare and gleaming shoulders, she passed hurriedly through a door which she perceived opening into an adjoining apartment. This proved to be a boudoir, but, as there was nothing in its character or furnishings to throw any light upon the situation, she contented herself with a cursory glance and continued on her tour of investigation.

The apartment opening out of the boudoir proved to be somewhat larger than the other, and was evidently intended to be used both as a library and a living-room. With scarcely a glance at the unusual and artistic beauty of the place, Alice's attention immediately fastened itself upon a sliding door at the further end. Beyond that door she felt instinctively lay the key to the mystery. It yielded easily to her touch, revealing to her gaze a large room which, from the oval sweep of its further wall, suggested the after cabin or saloon of a yacht. Like all the other rooms it was windowless and lighted

by transparent panels in the ceiling. In the centre of this room, at a large circular table, was seated a man in yachting flannels.

The stranger was so engrossed in the examination of some plans on the table before him that he did not become immediately conscious of her presence, and Alice had an opportunity hastily to examine his features. They were clear-cut, strongly marked and apparently those of a man between thirty and thirty-five.

The slight rustle of her skirts as she stepped into the saloon at once attracted his attention and he rose quickly to meet her.

“ Good morning, Miss Huntington.” The voice was low, well-modulated, and pleasant, and was accompanied by an engaging, though somewhat whimsical smile. “ I suppose as this is your initial appearance I should also add the formula ‘ Welcome to our city! ’ ”

“ May I ask where I am, who you are, and what is the meaning of all this? ”

Alice’s tone could be on occasion as coldly formal as a mountain glacier, and the chilling hauteur with which she closed her inter-

rogations was calculated to reduce this individual at once to a state in which he could properly appreciate his own insignificance. In this, apparently, it partly succeeded, for the smile disappeared and a look of cool and studied gravity took its place.

"To answer your questions seriatim, you are on board the yacht *Sabine*, at present some sixty miles off the Delaware Capes. As for myself, my name is Craig — John Gordon Craig, very much at your service. In regard to your last question, that is not quite so easily answered. Perhaps it will be sufficient for the present to say that you are here because I very greatly desire your presence, also your assistance and coöperation in certain psychological experiments which I have undertaken."

"I don't in the least understand you!"

"Probably not. I am afraid the explanation is rather vague and inadequate."

"Am I to understand that I am detained here forcibly and against my will?"

"I fear from your manner that I shall have to admit that you are detained here

against your will, but surely not forcibly, that is, only by the force of circumstances."

"Circumstances! What circumstances, pray?"

"Why, the circumstances of your being here, of course. There are no present means of leaving the *Sabine* unless you decide to swim, and the risk is so great that I feel that I should be justified in resorting even to physical constraint to prevent you from embarking on so hazardous an undertaking."

"But you can alter your course and return to New York, or, at least, to some port on the mainland."

"I regret to say that such a course would not coincide with my present plans."

"This — this is infamous!"

"'Infamous!' I beg of you patience, Miss Huntington. My methods of attaining my ends may be unusual and somewhat disturbing, but not infamous, surely."

"It is infamous; it is an outrage against society. Do you realize, Mr. Craig, if that is indeed your name, that your action is in defiance of the law?"

“ The law, Miss Huntington, moves rather slowly on the high seas, and for the machinery of the law to become completely effective it is first necessary to apprehend the — shall we say culprit, or victim? It is quite as frequently one as the other.”

“ I should use a more definite term — criminal! ”

“ That is a harsh and unpleasant word, truly, but we will not dispute about terminology. So far as the law goes, the situation seems to resemble the preliminary essential in the recipe for rabbit stew: ‘ first catch your rabbit. ’ ”

“ But you cannot hope to avoid pursuit for ever; sooner or later you will have to touch at some port, and then discovery will be certain.”

“ You do small credit to my resourcefulness, Miss Huntington; but if it is to be as you say I shall have to take the consequences.”

“ But what then is your object? Is it money you want? My father is rich; name your price, I beg of you; but let us have

done with this folly. You have the manner and appearance of a gentleman, and have probably been forced into this desperate enterprise by some financial crisis. Turn back to New York, and I pledge you my word you will not regret it."

"That is certainly a businesslike proposition, Miss Huntington, and deserves careful consideration." Craig paused reflectively. "At what price do you value yourself?"

The question came like a shot and found her utterly unprepared.

"Your father is reputed to be worth some three hundred millions," went on Craig calmly. "Now, assuming that you were in the custody of a man who thought you the most desirable thing in the world, what would you advise? Should he give you up in exchange for, let us say, immunity and the three hundred millions, or — well, put yourself in his place — would you give up what was the one supreme desire of your life for three hundred millions, or any number of millions?"

Alice was dumfounded at this unexpected turn of affairs. She could only stand and stare in absolute astonishment at the individual who disposed of her fate so calmly.

"Do you mean to say that you are not holding me for ransom?" she at length managed to whisper.

"Miss Huntington, I beg of you, do you think I would degrade you by putting a price upon your body as if you were a horse or an ox? Your father is a man of unlimited wealth, but I have that which is greater, unlimited power; not the power of kings and of courts, not the power of the law, but the power which drives this craft, which will turn the wheels of commerce and manufacture, and which will ultimately make every man indeed free and the equal of every other man — free to develop along his own lines and in his own sphere, an equal in everything except the capacity for development."

As Craig spoke a flush of enthusiasm swept over and transformed his face.

Alice felt a cold chill at her heart as if an icy hand were laid gently upon it. She

realized in that moment that she was in the power of a fanatic, a madman.

Craig was still speaking:—“The world, Miss Huntington, is trembling upon the verge of a social, political and industrial revolution, and fate has decreed that you and I shall play an important part in the drama.”

Instinctively Alice realized that she must humour him. Her only chance lay in a tactful handling of the situation, in appearing to enter into the spirit of his hallucinations.

“You say, ‘you and I,’ but why I? If you are called upon to achieve some great work for the good of humanity, why do you linger on the road, why do you encumber yourself with a co-worker, why do you drag me into it? Believe me, I have neither the capacity nor the inclination for any great achievement. I am merely a woman, superficial, shallow and frivolous if you will, but still a woman, and with all a woman’s limitations.”

“That is precisely it, Miss Huntington. You are indeed a woman, and no great work was ever achieved in this world but had a

woman for its inspiration. You ask me why I drag you into this. It is because — most unfortunately, perhaps — I love you; because I am anxious to see whether it is possible to make a true and womanly woman out of a spoiled and pampered member of our so-called best society."

At this calm assertion Alice's self-control suddenly deserted her. All the rage of a headstrong, imperious spirit suddenly flamed forth from her eyes. The torrent of her wrath vented itself in one blistering, biting word, — "*Coward!*"

Drawing the folds of her cloak about her, she swept out of the saloon, leaving Craig to follow her motions with eyes that darkened, even while his lips wreathed themselves into a calm, enigmatic smile.



CHAPTER III

STUDYING THE SITUATION

ON regaining her apartments, Alice sat herself down to consider the situation with what calmness she could muster. Naturally of a sanguine and self-reliant temperament, she did not give way to despair, but began to cast about to see what elements of defence her situation offered.

That, for the moment, she was quite in the power of the mysterious individual in the saloon was painfully apparent. She noticed that the door which separated them was fitted with a heavy and substantial lock, but, being the descendant of a long line of soldiers, she realized the absolute inefficiency of passive defence unless backed by at least some offensive power. Of weapons she had none, and the hurried glance she had given the apartments in passing through them did not reveal anything which might be made to

supply the deficiency. Evidently the first thing to do was to make a detailed examination of her surroundings and then decide upon some course of action. This she immediately set about with minute and characteristic thoroughness.

Accustomed as she was to the luxury and magnificence of the life of which she was a part, she could not help being surprised at the artistic taste and the lavish use of wealth which had been brought to the furnishing and ornamentation of these tiny rooms. Small they undeniably were, in comparison with the spacious halls of her father's Fifth Avenue mansion, but within their limits of size Alice had seen nothing more beautiful.

The sleeping apartment had been treated in Wedgwood design, the walls being panelled in deep Wedgwood blue, broken by white marble pilasters of Doric form, and edged with a frieze of Wedgwood figures in bas-relief. The massive bed had been built into one corner of the room, its salient angle being supported by a Doric column to match the pilasters. Marble was the material used

throughout, while the hangings and counterpane were of blue, heavily embroidered with Wedgwood designs. The floor was a mosaic of white marble with a border of Grecian block in blue, and was covered by a heavy blue rug woven with a border of Wedgwood figures. The ceiling was treated in harmony with the walls, the timbers appearing to be overlaid with a sheathing of white marble and the recesses tinted and ornamented with similar designs, except the large central panel, which was formed of a single sheet of opalescent glass, through which the sunlight softly flooded the apartment. The furniture was simple and in keeping with the general effect, and the whole atmosphere of the place seemed to woo one to slumber and repose.

The boudoir, which adjoined the chamber, was much more ornate in conception and treatment than the severe and chaste simplicity of the sleeping room. Here the decorator had apparently resigned himself without restraint to a riot of colour schemes. The panelling, pilasters and coffered ceiling of the sleeping apartment were retained, but

the sober tints and chaste treatment were entirely absent. The pilasters were of the Corinthian type of white marble with heavily gilded capitals, while the panelling appeared to be of some metal, shot and streaked with all the colours of the solar spectrum; Nile green and orange, pale lemon and violet, sapphire, turquoise and purple, all vied and shaded into one another with the iridescent sheen of oil on placid water; while the central panel in the ceiling, which lighted the apartment, glowed with all the vivid and changing colours of an Italian sunset.

The furniture was of the " Louis Quinze " pattern, richly upholstered with priceless tapestry, and, if the furnishings in the sleeping room had been meagre and severely simple, the boudoir abounded in all those accessories so necessary to the comfort and happiness of a woman.

The design and decoration of the rooms described, although rich and luxurious, were, in the main, along more or less conventional lines, but in the treatment of the two remaining apartments of the suite the architect had

evidently given full sweep to a vivid, artistic and imaginative temperament.

The bath, which opened out of the sleeping room on the opposite side from the boudoir, was designed to represent a grotto or sea-cavern. The floor appeared to be formed of a single sheet of heavy plate-glass, without flaw or bubble, beneath which a beach of fine, white sea sand shelved down into a little pool among the rocks. So realistic was the effect, that, as she stepped upon it, Alice instinctively lifted her skirts. It seemed as if she was in very truth walking on the surface of the water. Among the caves and shallows of the pool tiny crabs were scurrying about; small, brilliant-hued fish of tropical species darted hither and thither among the waving fronds of delicate marine plants, or rested motionless in the shadow of some shell-encrusted rock; sea-urchins, star-fish, and all the minute and varied life of the submarine world seemed to find here a home among their natural surroundings.

From the sides of the pool the walls of dark green basalt, broken by stratas of

gleaming quartz crystal, arose, vaulted and buttressed in nature's fashion, to an opening in the roof through which the blue dome of the sky was visible. In a niche, or recess, in one corner a shower bath had been cunningly fashioned, the jets of the needle spray issuing from a glittering mass of stalactites and stalagmites which depended from the ceiling and sprang from the floor in every direction.

The lavatory, in another corner, was designed in the shape of a large scallop shell, supported on a pedestal formed of the entwined bodies of three beautifully executed mermaids, who held the vessel upon the finger-tips of their slender, uplifted arms. The interior of the basin was lined with mother-of-pearl, and two faucets in the form of sea-horses, erect upon their tails, directed the streams of hot and cold water into its iridescent depths from their curious, trumpet-shaped mouths.

The bath was another triumph of fanciful art, being shaped like a huge osyter shell and lined with the same gleaming mother-of-

pearl. It rested on a base of black, sea-eroded rock and was filled with jets from the mouths of artistically wrought dolphins.

Disturbed as she was by the strange and overpowering predicament in which she found herself, Alice could not but gaze in rapt wonder upon this perfect gem of art. Rome and Pompeii in their most ornate and luxurious days could have presented nothing like this. Like a child she passed from one thing to another, touching this and that, operating the cunningly concealed valves of the shower bath, and turning the faucets on and off to assure herself that the things really worked.

Becoming deeply engrossed in a furious battle between a couple of large sea-crabs, which was going on in the pool beneath the plate glass floor, she dropped on her knees and watched the combat with an almost childlike interest, until the larger of the two succeeded in tearing a claw from his luckless adversary, and in making off with it to his hole under the rocks.

Approaching an arched opening, which

seemed to lead into another chamber of the grotto, she was suddenly confronted with a full length reflection of herself. Mirrors had been set into the walls in various places, which not only had the effect of multiplying the chambers of the cavern, but also allowed the users of this fairy grotto to view themselves from every angle. The sight of herself, still arrayed in the evening gown she had worn the previous night, brought back with a rush the full realization of her predicament. Hurriedly quitting the bath, she proceeded to make a minute examination of the remaining apartment at her command to see if it offered any solution of the problem. This was the library, situated beyond the boudoir, and opening into the saloon or after cabin.

If the designer of the bath had taken one into a fairy grotto, or cavern of the sea, the architect of the library had certainly transported one into the heart of the ancient wood. The pilasters, numerous and irregularly disposed, were fashioned in a marvellous imitation of the trunks of trees, whose supporting

branches stretched across the ceiling in every direction, and through whose leafy tangle one appeared to look up into the deep blue dome of the sky. The mural painting was entirely covered with plate-glass and had been so skilfully done that in whatever direction one looked one seemed to be gazing down through the endless isles and arches of a forest, while here and there, in the distance, showed the winding gleam of a river wandering through sunlit meadows to the sea. The books and book cases which determined the character of the apartment were arranged in recesses in the wall behind glass panels through whose leafy ornamentation their titles could be seen. Alice perceived that they covered a wide range of subjects, and that they seemed to have been selected to appeal to a woman's taste rather than to a man's; fiction, poetry and books of biography and art being predominant, while technical works appeared to be entirely absent. The current magazines also seemed to be well represented, and Alice felt that if her enforced confinement was going to be pro-

longed it would be in this apartment that she would find her chief solace and diversion.

A huge fireplace, like a cave in the side of a ledge, formed of huge granite boulders, loosely thrown together, broke the contour of the wall on one side of the room, and seemed in its verisimilitude as if it had been fashioned there by nature.

The furniture of the apartment consisted of several large and comfortable chairs upholstered in dark green leather, and a large library table, furnished with pens, ink and paper and all the usual accessories of a study.

As Alice's glance wandered over the table it fell upon something which had previously escaped her notice. A small, square envelope, addressed to herself, was lying on the blotter. At first she thought she would not open it, but curiosity finally triumphed, and taking a silver paper knife from the table she quickly slit the envelope and was soon in possession of its contents. The writing was round, firm and masculine in every line.

“ MY DEAR MISS HUNTINGTON : — ” it read.

“ It is not our present intention to starve you into subjection. The enclosed card will acquaint you with the extent and variety of our larder. You can transmit your orders to the chef through the pneumatic tube, which you will find in the recess back of the fireplace, and your meals will be served by means of the dumb waiter communicating with your boudoir. We hope that the necessity of waiting upon yourself, while you elect to remain in retirement will not prove noticeably inconvenient.

“ Anticipating the time when you will consent to adorn our humble board with your gracious presence, we remain

“ Hopefully yours,

“ GORDON CRAIG.

“ P. S. Your trunks have arrived and will be found in the closet of your sleeping-room. a. c.”

Alice read this somewhat remarkable epistle with mixed and conflicting emotions.

“Starved into subjection” indeed! Her whole aggressive and combative nature immediately rose up in arms at the suggestion. Never in her whole life from her earliest recollections had she known the meaning of coercion. Even her childish whims and fancies had been the law of a doting father and an army of devoted servants. The idea that anyone could dominate her, could break down her will power, seemed utterly inconceivable. Like the Imperial Guard at Waterloo, she could die, but she would not surrender. This individual who called himself Craig was destined to learn of what stuff the Huntingtons were made.

At first she decided she would eat nothing, but soon better judgment prevailed. If a struggle was impending, she realized that she must fortify herself to meet it.

“It is not our present intention to starve you into subjection,” Craig had written. Evidently he was relying on mental coercion rather than physical force to accomplish his purposes, whatever they were; although the insertion of the word “present” was some-

what disconcerting and suggested the possible employment of drastic measures later on.

However, Alice felt that it was profitless to speculate at the present moment, so sitting down, she consulted the menu, and ordered a simple though substantial breakfast of chops, eggs, and coffee as the first move in preparing to meet whatever emergency the future might hold.

Despatching this order through the pneumatic tube, which she found without difficulty, her thoughts next turned themselves to the trunks of which Craig had made mention in his postscript. Her original examination of the sleeping apartment had failed to reveal a closet, but as Craig had spoken of one, there must be one there. She at once decided to institute a thorough and exhaustive search. If a closet was there the door must be in one of the panels. She examined them all carefully, and soon her attention was attracted by a projection in the ornamental frieze which looked as if it might possibly serve as a door knob. She pushed it, and pulled it, and finally remembering that all

the doors which she had encountered so far on this mysterious craft were of the sliding variety, she pressed it aside, when the panel yielded easily and slid noiselessly into a recess back of the pilaster, revealing a large, square closet almost the size of a room, around the sides of which four of her own trunks were neatly arranged. As the key to each was dangling from a tag attached to the lock she lost no time in opening the lids and examining the contents.

According to the instructions which she had always given her maid, Alice found a neatly written card in the top of each trunk giving a list of what it contained and the part of the trunk in which each article was packed. In glancing over these memoranda she at once perceived that whoever had superintended the operation of packing had made lavish provisions for her comfort and convenience. All her toilet and travelling requisites were in their accustomed places. All her equipment for a sea-voyage, — warm clothing, steamer rugs, rain coats, furs, etc., were present, and in addition, two of the

trunks were completely filled with her choicest and most elaborate evening and dinner gowns. Even the jewels and ornaments she was most accustomed to wear had been packed in their cases and occupied a tray in one of the trunks.

Alice's spirits rose as she surveyed her resources. If beauty aided by adornment was a woman's most effective weapon she felt she was amply provided with the materials of war. Selecting a morning gown of soft yellow crêpe, which she could easily get into, Alice hastily discarded her badly rumpled evening dress, and after a hurried and somewhat nervous surrender to the seductions of the needle spray in her fairy grotto, donned her new raiment feeling refreshed and not a little elated.

She had hardly completed these operations when the sound of an electric bell vibrating in the next room announced the arrival of her breakfast. The dumb waiter was not conspicuously in evidence, but her search for the closet had educated her, and she soon found a movable panel, and sliding it back a

breakfast table, set and laid with silver and fine linen, and bearing the viands smoking hot which she had ordered, rolled smoothly out of the recess into the middle of the room.

Breakfast disposed of, she pushed the table back on to the lift, closed the panel, and set herself down to a serious consideration of the situation. Her nerves were rapidly recovering their tone, and she felt mounting within her a sense of confidence, a feeling of equality with the situation which before had been lacking.

That her abduction had been carefully planned she could not doubt. Everything pointed to a thoroughness of preparation, an attention to detail, that at once denoted the presence of a master mind. The only thing she could do at present seemed to be to remain quietly in her apartments and await developments.

Slowly the long hours dragged themselves away. She selected a book from the library and tried to interest herself, but her eyes wandered continually to the clock over the fireplace.

The clock, like everything connected with this strange craft, on which she found herself, possessed an individuality of its own. It was formed of three concentric dials, the larger and outer one being divided into twenty-four divisions for the hours of the day, but with this peculiarity: The numbers from I up to XII being retained, XII midnight occupying the customary position of VI at the bottom of the dial, while XII noon remained in its place at the top. A large heart-shaped pointer carried on an invisible arm moved around the outer dial, while the two inner ones similarly equipped showed the minutes and the seconds. The lower half of the dial was formed of an expanding and contracting black sector, which indicated the hours of darkness and daylight. At night the dial was faintly illuminated by an electric light concealed within its face. Above the clock, set flush in a panel of the ceiling, was a large telltale compass, and as Alice raised her eyes to it she noticed that the needle indicated a course due south.

Was she really on a ship in the open

ocean? Nothing in her surroundings as she sat in the library, except the compass, seemed to suggest it. The rolling and pitching of a vessel in the open sea was entirely absent. Of motion there was none except that strange sense of motion in rest. Alice felt instinctively that she, herself, and all of her surroundings, were moving smoothly and swiftly through space, but of the tangible evidences of motion there were none. The silence was oppressive, — no movement on deck, — no sound of voices came to her ears, — no jar or vibration of machinery, only that faint musical hum, and the soft scuffling sound of distant waters. Occasionally at long intervals the strokes of chimes were borne to her ears. Sometimes they came faint and sweetly, as if from a great distance; at others as loud and sonorous vibrations as though the bells were close at hand.

As darkness approached she began to look about for some means of illumination. An electric switch in the wainscoting soon caught her eye, and on turning it the darkening skylight was at once flooded with a soft and dif-

fused light whose precise nature she could not determine, but which illuminated the apartment evenly and brilliantly in all its recesses.

As the evening passed away, and nothing seemed destined to transpire, Alice felt the sense of drowsiness again creeping upon her. Acknowledging the uselessness of trying to keep awake indefinitely, she returned to her chamber, and lying down on one of the couches was soon in a heavy, dreamless sleep.



CHAPTER IV

AN ENCOUNTER ON THE HIGH SEAS


WHEN Alice again opened her eyes the chimes of the clock in the library were just striking nine. Exhaustion, incident to the mental strain she was under, had caused her to sleep well into the day, but the sleep had refreshed her and restored in a great measure her poise and self-confidence. She quickly decided that she would not endure another day in the solitary confinement of her apartment. She determined to carry the war into the enemy's country. Even if the individual she had encountered was not amenable to reason he must have accomplices, and they certainly must have embarked on the enterprise for gain. Could she not bid as high as anyone for their allegiance? The thought comforted her and renewed her confidence. She would show this man that though helpless and isolated,

she was an antagonist not to be despised — no weak and submissive victim ready to his hand.

Knowing full well the power of her beauty, and having a correct appreciation of the accessories necessary to render it completely effective, she selected a walking suit of blue serge, which fitted perfectly her tall and gracefully rounded figure, and hastily donning it started on her foray into the enemy's country.

The main cabin was deserted when she entered it, but a broad staircase on her right led evidently to the deck above. Quickly ascending this Alice found herself in a glass enclosed apartment, and for the first time she had a chance to take in her situation. She was in the chart room of what seemed to be a large ocean-going motor boat. A sliding door in the after end opened on to the promenade deck, while forward, one on either side gave access to a short flight of steps which led up to the forecastle deck, which was raised to about the level of the windows. In the circular sweep of the for-

ward end of this chart house stood the binnacle, a heavy column of white marble, which looked more like the pedestal of a sun-dial than a nautical device. Alice had a considerable fund of nautical lore gleaned from her many cruises on her father's yacht, and she noticed at once the peculiar construction of this binnacle. The compass, a disk of ground glass, with raised compass points in blue enamel, was not swung in brackets, as is usual on vessels, but set flush in the top of the pedestal with apparently no provision made for any displacement caused by the rolling and pitching of the vessel. Two small metal balls of dull bronze about the size of billiard balls, were mounted on the pedestal on either side of the compass card, while a pointer, of the same material, was pivoted at its centre, its forward end terminating in an arrow point, while the other carried a small knob which was arranged to slide over a scale marked on the arm. A segment of the same metal was also set in the top of the pedestal edging the after end of the compass plate and extending on each



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side almost to the two metal balls previously mentioned. Of wheels, levers and other controlling devices usually found in the pilot house of a vessel there were absolutely none.

As Alice approached to examine this peculiar binnacle, she perceived Craig standing on the raised forecastle deck, and, true to her determination, proceeded at once to carry the action to close quarters. Stepping out on the deck she ascended the short ladder which gave access to his coign of vantage.

The *Sabine* was cutting her way through an absolutely smooth sea. Above the sun was shining brightly in a perfectly clear sky. Not a cloud revealed itself in all the blue dome above save in the south, where a few fine wreaths of vapour, delicate and feathery as plumes of distant cannon smoke, were wafted up from below the horizon to stain with their whiteness the celestial purity of that overarching sphere. All around, the blue of the sky met the deeper blue of the ocean in a sharply defined, unbroken ring.

As Alice ascended the stairs Craig heard

her step and lifting his cap he turned to meet her.

“ A most beautiful morning, Miss Alice, I suppose this is what ‘ Old Salts ’ would call a weather breeder.”

Alice felt the note of calm — not assurance, — but confidence in his voice, and instantly her combative temperament rose in arms. She noticed that he even had had the audacity to address her by her given name, although she admitted that he did have the grace to prefix a title. Realizing that there was nothing to be gained by a display of temper, however, she curbed herself, and answered coldly, — “ I am not greatly interested in the state of the weather, Mr. Craig. What I came here for was to ask you how much longer this farce is going to continue.”

“ I am glad you look upon it as a farce; I feared you might possibly regard it in the light of a tragedy.”

“ It may easily *become* a tragedy,” replied Alice tensely.

“ Yes,” continued Craig reflectively, “ you

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are quite right, it *may* easily become a tragedy. You have a strong and determined nature, Miss Huntington; so have I; it is easily possible that one or the other may break in the bending."

"You will never bend me, never!"

"That is as it may appear in the book of fate, but we shall have plenty of time to discuss that question later."

"We shall not have plenty of time to discuss that or any other question, except the question of returning immediately to New York."

"I am sorry, but that is the one question I cannot discuss with you at present."

"Cannot or will not?"

Craig shrugged his shoulders,—"As you please."

Alice bit her lip in a furious effort to keep back her rising anger. "This is unbearable!" she said, her low voice vibrating with passion, "I—I will appeal to your crew. There must at least be one man among them who will aid a woman in distress."

"So you would stir up mutiny on the high

seas, would you? I am sorry to disappoint you, but you see I happen to be the crew,—

“‘ For I am the cook and the captain bold,
And the mate of the Nancy Brig,
And the bo’sun tight and the midshipmite,
And the crew of the Captain’s gig.’

I believe that is the way the old doggerel runs, or something to that effect.”

“ Do you mean to tell me that you sail this ship alone? ”

“ Precisely.”

“ But the steward, your chef? ” faltered Alice.

“ Forgive me, but I also am the chef. I hope the cuisine is satisfactory.”

Alice was dumfounded. She was absolutely alone in the midst of the ocean with this man. He might be a madman, monster, or what not. Her heart sank at the thought. She was trying to grasp with her mind the full significance of the situation, when the faint distant stroke of chimes broke the momentary pause.

Craig turned quickly. Far away on the distant horizon a dull smudge stained the

pure sapphire blue. The smoke of a steamer was in sight. Craig and Alice watched it with divergent and conflicting emotions. The vessel, a large liner, rose rapidly. The *Sabine* was driving easily along at a speed of about ten knots, her lean prow cutting the long ground swell as smoothly as a knife shears through butter. When first seen, the smoke was about one point on her port bow. If no change was made in the course the two ships would pass close to each other. Craig stepped into the pilot house and returned with a telescope, through which he examined the oncoming liner attentively.

"She must be the *Prince Karl* of the North German Lloyd line," he announced. "My old friend, Captain Scott, commands her. I saw by the papers that she was going to the Windward Islands with a party of excursionists."

Alice did not reply. All her attention was concentrated on the approaching ship. In less than half an hour she would be abeam, and she saw that if the course was not changed they would pass within a half a mile

of each other. She expected momentarily to see Craig make some movement to alter his direction, but he gave no sign, continuing to gaze at the liner through his glass. Rapidly the two ships drew together. Alice could see the flash and glitter of the brass work, the details of her boats, funnels and rigging, and the figures of men upon her bridge. Would it be possible to signal? Suddenly a thought flashed upon her which set her heart beating violently. "The Meyer Code!"

Quietly she stepped back, and softly descended the stairs to the deck on the further side of the pilot house. She knew that the important news of the day was communicated to all the large liners by wireless. Her mysterious disappearance must by this time have been flashed all over the world. Craig apparently did not heed her movements, but continued to gaze through his telescope.

As soon as she gained the shelter of the deck house, Alice stepped quickly toward the stern until she came out upon the open deck. Here she was shielded from Craig's view by the pilot house, which she had placed squarely

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between them, at the same time being in plain sight from the deck of the liner. The two ships were now fairly abeam and passing rapidly. Drawing out her handkerchief, Alice began to signal frantically in the "Meyer Code," —

"Help! Help! I am a prisoner here. Help! Rescue!"

Majestically the liner proceeded on her way. The ships had passed now and were rapidly drawing apart. Alice heard the telescope close with a snap, and Craig's step on the ladder.

Tears of rage and bitter disappointment blinded her eyes. With one last despairing effort she signalled again, —

"Help! I am Alice Huntington."

Craig found her leaning against the chart house, one tense hand clutching a fold of her skirt, her handkerchief pressed against her lips to stifle a sob.

"Too bad," he remarked sympathetically. Suddenly — "Hello! what's this?" he cried, as he cast a look at the receding liner. A commotion seemed to be going on upon

her bridge. Men were swarming up the ladders and one levelled a telescope at them.

Suddenly the huge bows of the ship swung sharply to port. With a majestic sweep she altered her course and sheered up into the wake of the *Sabine*, while up at the mast-head went her ensign with the red and white pennant of the International Code fluttering beneath it.

“ So he wants to have a little conversation, does he? ” remarked Craig. “ Well, I guess we can oblige him.” Going into the chart house he soon returned with a large canvas bag and a leather-covered copy of the code book. Giving the latter to Alice, he set the answering pennant at the “ dip ” and awaited results.

The two vessels had been moving at such speed that by the time the liner had swung around and was fairly in the wake of the *Sabine*, she was some five miles astern. Smoke was pouring from her funnels in heavy clouds, showing that her turbines were being forced to their utmost capacity.

Alice noticed that the *Sabine* also had in some unaccountable way increased her speed, and was now driving through the water at a rapid rate, but in her mind the issue was no longer in doubt. She knew the *Prince Karl*, a new ship, and credited with being one of the fastest liners afloat; her speed of twenty-nine knots would make the effort of any motor boat to escape appear ridiculous. Gradually the liner cut down the distance between them.

As Craig finished setting his code pennant a mass of bunting was broken out from the end of her signal yard.

Craig studied it through the glass, — “ Let us see; code flag over red and white vertical stripe, that is ‘ H,’ I think. Will you look it up, Miss Alice, and see what he says? ”

Alice turned to the table and ran her glance down the column until it came to “ H.” The light of battle was gleaming brightly in her eyes. In a voice from which she tried in vain to exclude the ring of triumph, she read, “ Stop, heave to, or come

nearer, I have something important to communicate."

"I don't think we want to hear his important communication," remarked Craig. "Will you let me take the book a moment, Miss Huntington?" He ran his eye rapidly over the tables and then selected two flags from the pile of brilliant-hued bunting at his feet. A yellow flag with a black ball in the centre, and another with blue and white horizontal stripes.

"It is fortunate that you will not be able to hear the remarks of my friend, Captain Scott, when he reads that signal. In any newspaper office they would probably be labelled 'unprintable.'"

Alice picked up the code book and saw that the two flags flying were "I" over "J." Turning to the table she read, "Unless your communication is very important, I must be excused."

The supreme effrontery of the man amazed her. Craig was standing by the rail watching the oncoming liner, not with the cool composure of the strong man who suddenly

finds his plans gone awry; not with the bravado of a coward caught in his own trap, but with the concentrated interest of one who is solving an absorbingly interesting problem.

The signal they had shown evidently acted like a spur on the liner, for the volume of smoke from her funnels increased and a new display of bunting fluttered from her signal yard.

"Blue with a white St. Andrew's cross, and a blue and white checkerboard. 'M' over 'N,'" remarked Craig. "What does he say this time, Miss Huntington?"

"Stop instantly!" replied Alice, referring to the table.

"Hum! That is rather peremptory. I guess there is no answer to that signal. Won't you come astern, where you can sit down and watch the proceedings?" Craig hoisted the answering pennant and then lowered it as a sign that the last signal had been understood, and then thrusting the brilliantly coloured flags into their receptacle disappeared into the chart house.

In a few moments he rejoined Alice at the stern, and seating himself on the taffrail studied the liner as one who had no particular interest in her movements. The furious stoking which was going on in her fire room seemed to be producing results, however, for she had now drawn up to within about three miles, but the gain was being made very slowly, and Alice awoke to the fact that the *Sabine* was now tearing along at a phenomenal rate of speed. So easily did she slip through the water, however, that only the rapid drift of the spume astern betrayed the tremendous speed at which she was traveling.

Slowly the minutes dragged by. Alice, keyed to the highest tension, saw that the liner was now drawing no nearer, indeed in the last few minutes it almost seemed as if she had lost a little. A knot of men were working hurriedly around some object on the forecastle, and the officers on her bridge were watching the *Sabine* intently through their glasses. Suddenly the signal flags, which were still flying from her mast, were replaced

by another set; the same yellow flag over a blue pennant with a white ball.

“ ‘I,’ ‘D,’ ” translated Craig. “ What is it this time? ”

Alice consulted the book with feverish haste. “ ‘I,’ ‘D,’ ‘I,’ ‘D,’ ” would she never find it!

“ ‘Heave to! or I will fire into you!’ ” she cried. “ You had better give up, Mr. Craig, the odds are too much against you.”

Craig only smiled. “ This bids fair to become interesting. May I ask you to go below, Miss Huntington? Captain Scott is a pretty determined fellow when aroused, and I do not know how far he might be disposed to push this matter.”

“ He’ll push it to a decisive conclusion if he is the man he should be. No, I will not go below, I will take my chances in the open. The satisfaction of seeing you beaten and humiliated will more than repay me for any risk I may run.”

“ Oh, very well. As you choose.”

Finding that, in spite of his efforts, he

was no longer gaining on the chase, the captain of the liner determined to play his trump card. There was a flash, a puff of white smoke streamed out from the forecastle deck of the liner, and the shell from a six pounder went screaming over the *Sabine* and struck the water a quarter of a mile beyond.

"Pretty close," muttered Craig. "I did not think he would dare to do it. He must be very sure of his ground."

The whistle of the shot seemed to act like magic on the *Sabine*. Like a frightened thing she leaped forward and Alice saw with chagrin that the liner was now being dropped rapidly.

The first shot was quickly followed by a second, which struck close to the port bow, and then the shells came rapidly, striking now on one side, now on the other, moaning and whining overhead and occasionally sprinkling them both with splashes of spray.

Alice felt that she was taking part in a battle. She stood with tightly clenched hands and flashing eyes watching the pompons of

smoke as they rose, and listened to the sharp staccato reports of the gun as they drifted down the wind to her. If they would only shoot to hit, but the gunner evidently had had his instructions and the range was increasing every moment.

In the twenty minutes following the crack of the first gun the liner had been dropped over two miles, and now the shells were beginning to fall in their wake. Farther and farther she dropped astern. Alice watched her with bitter despair and chagrin. Suddenly she saw the lofty bows swing to starboard. Soon her whole port side was exposed, and in another moment the big liner had swung around on her course and was rapidly disappearing to the north. As she turned, Alice saw a man wigwagging with a big red flag from the end of her flying bridge, but she was too dispirited to translate the message. Choking down a sob, she hurried into the chart house, and descended to her cabin.

Craig watched her go with an expression in which sympathy struggled with satisfac-

tion. He had read the message and a smile of comprehension had gleamed upon his features. "Cannot assist. Will report you. Keep up courage."



CHAPTER V

THE JAPANESE DAGGER

As Alice began to recover her equanimity the full realization of her situation commenced to dawn upon her. The *Sabine* had run away from the *Prince Karl* with ease. Evidently it would take a scout cruiser or a destroyer to overhaul her, and what chance was there for such a ship to find them upon the pathless waters of the ocean? She had no means of knowing where she was or whither she was going, and no means of communicating that knowledge had she possessed it. The telltale compass overhead still pointed due south, it is true, but that enlightened her only in a general way.

With no one on board to whom she could appeal she felt supremely isolated and defenceless, but as she grew calmer this fact, instead of reducing her to despair, aroused her natural fighting instinct. Alone and unaided and with only a woman's weapons she

told herself she would conquer and subdue this man. After all he was only a man, and what man had ever been able to withstand the fascination of her charms? The fact that superficially he appeared to have the manners of a gentleman only made him the more vulnerable. Accustomed as she had been from childhood to receive the homage and attention which her wealth and beauty evoked, and relying upon an unbroken series of successes in school, college and society, she looked forward to the conflict, if not with assurance, at least with confidence. In less than a week she would have the mighty Mr. Craig at her feet. He might be "the mate, and the captain, too," but she would be the one to give the orders. Yet when she recalled his firm set jaw and the keen gray eyes she felt that she had a task cut out for her. However, if man is the proper study of mankind, he is eminently, exhaustively and continually the study of woman, and Alice felt that she knew her quarry.

It is an axiom of war that a night attack is often successful where an assault by day-

light would fail. Alice determined to make her first advance on the enemy's entrenchments after dinner when her adversary might naturally be supposed to be in his most beatific and plastic mood. As her stay on board the *Sabine* was evidently destined to be of some duration she decided to occupy the time before her attack in unpacking her trunks and arranging her belongings. As she delved among the mysteries of lace, satin and lingerie she fervently thanked the fates which had provided her so abundantly with the accessories necessary to carry on her campaign. As she came to the bottom of the last trunk she discovered tucked down in one corner a tiny automatic pistol with several magazines of cartridges. With a cry of joy she pounced upon it and thrust it into a secret pocket in her skirt. She had always been accustomed to handling firearms and the possession of this little gun gave her a sense of security which she had not felt since she found herself on the *Sabine*. So rapid was the rebound of her spirits that as she moved about in the boudoir, giving a touch here and

there to its arrangements with the deftness which is the exclusive attribute of a refined and cultured woman, her voice unconsciously bubbled forth in an aria from one of her favourite operas. Craig, in the chart room above, heard it and wondered at the sudden revulsion in her feelings.

As darkness fell, Alice, from her assortment of dinner and ball gowns, selected the weapon she would use in her preliminary assault — a soft, filmy, clinging affair of dull gold which displayed all the superb perfection of her figure. To insinuate herself into this elaborate creation of the modiste's art without the assistance of her maid was a task of no small magnitude, but feminine ingenuity has too often achieved the impossible to be balked by such a trifle as an inaccessible hook and eye. Having carefully arrayed herself in this she waited until she thought that Craig must have finished his dinner, and then, with a heart beating somewhat faster than usual, she opened the library door and stepped into the saloon.

Craig was seated by the table apparently

lost in profound thought. He had evidently just been cutting the leaves of a magazine, for the book lay beside him on the table and with it a Japanese dagger which he had been using as a paper cutter. He was leaning slightly forward in his chair, one arm resting on his knee while the other supported his chin. His face was turned slightly from her. The attitude, the expression, the clean-cut profile, the look of melancholy abstraction, all strongly suggested the seated figure by Michael Angelo from the tomb of Lorenzo de Medici the younger.

Alice paused momentarily to study this striking and unusual countenance. It was a face of extreme refinement as well as of unusual strength. The face of a dreamer but also that of a man of action. Tenacity, initiative, imagination and that subtle something which suggests the artistic temperament — all were there.

Despite her hatred of the man Alice felt the power emanating from him, the magnetism of his personality and, for the moment, a misgiving as to her final success smote her.

Banishing the feeling instantly however, she advanced to the table. The quick light of admiration which leaped into Craig's eyes at sight of her brought, in spite of herself, the rich blood to her cheeks.

"You are radiantly beautiful this evening, Miss Huntington."

"Mr. Craig, you appear to have the superficial attributes of a gentleman; I think, under the circumstances, you might at least spare me your compliments."

"How can you expect anything different when you burst upon one in such a vision of loveliness? I heard you singing to-day. One might almost imagine that you had won this morning instead of lost."

Instantly the light of battle flamed in Alice's eyes.

"Mr. Craig, there are two very old and trite sayings which I will recall to you, 'He laughs best who laughs last,' and 'The race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong.'"

"Pardon me for disagreeing with you, but I think that history will bear me out in say-

ing that the battle is always to the strong, though one's strength sometimes lies in one's weakness, and the strength of the intellect is as often returned the victor as the power of brute force. The strength of the intellect is apparent in the choice of the weapons with which you attack me this evening. They are very effective."

"It was very considerate or perhaps inconsiderate in you to provide them. I confess I am curious. I should like to know how you succeeded in doing it."

"It was very simple. I can easily tell you. Some years ago I had the opportunity of helping a young fellow out of a very serious scrape. He turned out to be the brother of your maid. When I conceived the idea that a sea voyage would be a good thing for your health and future peace of mind, I went to her, and in consideration of the old debt of gratitude she consented to help me. I told her that some of your friends were going to get you away on a short cruise as a surprise, and asked her to pack such things as you would need. I remember her scorn when I

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said *a trunk*. She haughtily informed me that a lady of your station could not possibly travel as far as Jersey City with only one trunk, and insisted that it was impossible for you to get along with less than four. Well, I told her to go ahead, mark them for the yacht *Sabine* and have them sent to the Club House. As she was acting in your name, of course, no questions were asked, and it was a simple matter when they arrived to have them brought on board."

"A simple matter truly. I think I shall have something to say to Anna when I get back."

"I hope you will not be severe. She thought she was acting in your interests. However, I have promised to stand between her and your wrath."

"You take a great deal upon yourself."

"One must in these days if one wants to succeed."

"You are evidently a genius in planning. If I am not too curious, perhaps you will tell me what you were planning just now when I entered."

“ The emancipation of the race.”

“ A mighty project truly. Perhaps if I may be allowed to suggest it would be more to the purpose if you directed a portion of your thought towards the emancipation of one defenceless and unprotected woman.”

“ All in good time I assure you.”

“ Mr. Craig, do you realize that it is absolutely necessary for me to be in New York by the first of next week? ”

“ Yes, to carry out your contract with the Duke of Buckminster.”

“ The reason concerns only myself.”

“ You are mistaken, Miss Huntington. The reason concerns me, and every other honest man who respects and reverences the womanhood of our country. I shall deserve the approbation of every true American in preventing this — I shall not call it international alliance—international disgrace would be the better term; and prevent it I will, regardless of the fate of my own cherished desires. You have pledged yourself to a notorious libertine with a reputation that spreads over the length and breadth of two

continents, and if you do not know it you ought to be told. You have sold yourself, your body and your wealth, to a broken-down, world-worn sprig of nobility, and for what — for the dearly bought right to wear a coronet, the right to social precedence, the right to appear in court circles, to be talked of as one of the first ladies of a degenerate society. In what are you better than the women of the street who sell themselves for money, for the clothes to cover their nakedness, for a night's shelter? In what, I ask you, are you better than they? ”

Alice was struck dumb by this outburst. Never in all her life had anyone dared to address such words to her before. A tense and terrible anger, a wild, consuming rage seemed to mount within her as she listened. A white hot iron seemed to be searing her brain back of her eyeballs. It was as if the lash of his words were being laid upon her naked, quivering soul. As she grasped at the table for support, her hand touched the hilt of the Japanese knife. Instinctively her fingers closed around it. Her vision became

restricted, her surroundings were blotted out by a black, impenetrable mist, save only a luminous circle in the centre through which she saw Craig's earnest face and glowing eyes looking up at her from a great distance as through a tunnel. The loose collar of his flannel shirt was rolled away from his throat, and the vital current could be seen pulsating beneath the smooth bronzed skin. The pupils of Alice's eyes contracted to glowing points. Her breath came in laboured gasps. With a low, inarticulate cry she grasped the knife, leaned forward and struck — struck full where the round, smooth column of the neck merged into the thorax. Then her vision cleared suddenly. She saw the startled look leap into Craig's eyes as he leaned quickly forward to intercept her. She saw the point of the knife enter the firm, bronzed flesh; saw the jet of crimson which leaped forth at the touch of the steel: then her senses reeled. Staggering like one mortally stricken she gained the library, dragged to the door and fell in a senseless heap upon the hearth rug.

CHAPTER VI

A NIGHT OF HORROR

WHEN Alice recovered consciousness she lay for some time in a dazed stupor. The library was flooded with a soft light from the luminous panels in the ceiling. Not a sound broke the stillness. Not a footfall resounded on the deck above. Slowly the incidents of the terrible episode in the after saloon came back to her. With a shudder she dragged herself to her feet. A tiny spot of blood showed on the round, white flesh of her forearm. Mechanically she moistened her handkerchief with her lips and rubbed it off, and then with a sudden start dropped the filmy square of lace to the floor.

The triple dial of the clock over the fireplace indicated ten-thirty, and as she looked, the chimes slowly and solemnly struck the half hour. With a shudder she looked toward the library door and saw that the heavy bolt

was in place; then, with a sudden accession of fear, she fled through the apartments, locking every door behind her until she crouched, a trembling, terror-stricken thing, in the farthest corner of the lavatory.

The memory of that night of slowly distilled horror is one which Alice will never forget. Her mind and body seemed to be working independently, each regarding the other as some strange phenomenon it had never encountered before. Violent fits of trembling would be followed by long periods when she would sink into a semi-conscious condition, almost approaching a swoon. A dull pain seemed to be gnawing at the base of her brain.

The resplendent goldfish darting about in the placid pool beneath her flashed before unseeing eyes. The soft sheen of mother-of-pearl glowed before unheeding senses. The face given back to her from the long mirrors was one she did not know: hollow, drawn, and ashen, with heavy black circles underneath the eyes. She turned her head away from it with a shiver. Her right hand

was stretched from her as if to remove the rest of her body as far as possible from its contaminating touch. At intervals she would seize a towel and scrub it feverishly, as if to remove an invisible stain. Like a hunted animal her eyes wandered continually to the door as though she expected to see a shape, impalpable and grisly, materialize through the solid panel.

She felt that she was going mad. As the long hours dragged away, however, her mind gradually became calmer, through sheer inability of the senses to sustain the tension. To her strong young brain the power of self-command, the power to think connectedly gradually returned. Yet this did not lessen the horror of the situation. She was trapped in her rooms by that terrible, ghastly thing in the after cabin. She was alone in mid-ocean, on a craft of whose method of control she knew nothing. She tried to tell herself that she had acted in self-defence, that she was justified in using any weapon at her command, but she knew it was not so. She had acted in the blind fury his scathing ar-

raignment had engendered. She had struck in the fierce tempest of passion his words had lashed into being. It was murder — nothing less than murder. She shuddered violently as her thoughts framed the word.

Slowly the soft gray of the dawn filtering through the skylight above drove her into action. It was impossible to stay where she was, she must gain the deck at all costs, though the thought of passing through the cabin gave her a trembling fit that lasted for half an hour. It was an hour before she could bring herself to unfasten the bath room door and several before she could force herself to the door of the saloon. At last, summoning all her courage, she opened it and looked into the cabin. It was empty. As she gazed into the apartment with dilated, uncomprehending eyes, a faint, sweet thread of melody reached her ears. It was the distant sound of a violin playing the "Melody in F." Awe-stricken and with shaking knees she followed the sound. It seemed to come from the innermost recesses of a suite of rooms on the opposite side of the ship from

her own. As her trembling, outstretched hand touched the knob of the door the performer paused a moment and then launched into a brilliant burst of pyrotechnics from Paganini's "Concerto for the G string." Alice pushed open the door. Craig, who was at the further end of the room, turned and saw her white face framed in the doorway. Laying down the violin he hastened toward her. Alice regarded him with incredulous, unbelieving eyes.

"I thought I had killed you!" she whispered in a hushed, awe-stricken voice, "I thought I had killed you!"

"Oh, no, not as bad as that," laughed Craig.

"I thought I had killed you!" she repeated.

Craig saw that she was completely unstrung.

"You must sit down and I will get you something," he commanded. Placing a hand on her shoulder he drew her into the room.

Alice yielded to him weakly like a child.

Her limbs were shaking so that she could hardly support herself.

Craig placed her in the depths of a huge armchair, and going to the cupboard returned with a glass of port wine and a plate of crackers.

"Here, this will make you feel better."

"Are you sure you are not dead?" Alice pleaded, looking up at him wistfully.

"Dead! Of course not," laughed Craig.

"It was touch and go, though. You missed the carotid artery by less than an inch. As it was, you struck over, and the only harm done was a slash across the shoulderblade. A little collodion and absorbent cotton fixed it up in short order."

"How thankful! How thankful I am!"

"I thought you knew," he said contritely.

"Not for the world would I have let you pass through the night under such an impression."

"Oh, it was horrible! horrible!" Alice leaned back in the chair and closed her eyes.

Craig watched her with a glance in which sympathy was not unmixed with satisfaction.

To remould a nature it is often necessary first to break it.

After a time, under the stimulus of the wine, Alice's nerves began to recover their tone sufficiently to enable her to look about.

Craig's apartments were decidedly different from her own. The place occupied by her library and boudoir was thrown into one long room. Through a door at the further end she could look into the bedroom and bath, all plain and severely simple. The fittings were of white enamel. There was nothing that suggested a den. The bed, a narrow white iron affair, proclaimed the anchorite rather than the voluptuary. A long drawing table occupied one end of the largest room. A few pieces of gymnastic apparatus were fastened to the wall, while the book shelves, which occupied the recesses in the partition, were filled with technical works, among which, books on hydraulic and electrical engineering seemed to predominate. The ornate magnificence of decoration which obtained in the suite she was occupying was conspicuously absent.

As Alice's glance travelled over the simple furnishings of the rooms it rested on the violin.

"I wish you would play for me," she said simply. "I think it would make me feel better."

"I would gladly but I am such a wretched amateur. If you feel able to come into the saloon I will let you listen to some real music."

Alice acquiesced, and as soon as she was comfortably ensconced in an easy chair, Craig opened a cabinet in the wall which seemed to be filled with rolls of perforated music.

"What would you like?" he asked, "The Tannhauser Overture," or "A Hot Time in the Old Town To-night?"

"Please make the selection yourself."

Craig studied the labels for a moment, and then selected a roll from the collection and slipped it into a panel in the wall. In a moment the saloon was flooded with the mellow, golden tones of the opening movement of the Pastoral Symphony. The whole place

seemed to be bathed in a shower of harmony; of horns and strings and wood wind, and of many instruments that Alice had never heard before and whose character she could not determine. The volume of sound rose and fell, crescendoed and fell again, overflowing and filling every nook and corner, yet never exceeding the acoustic capacity of the room. It seemed as if the Symphony were being performed by an orchestra of seraphims just beyond the ceiling.

“What is it?” Alice whispered.

“Why, Beethoven’s ‘Sixth Symphony,’ ” responded Craig.

“Yes, of course,” impatiently, “but what is the instrument?”

“Why, that is the Tel-orchestron,” replied Craig, as the music ceased. “It might well be called the divine harmony, the music of the spheres. Have you never heard of it?”

“Never. It is certainly wonderful. Please tell me about it.”

“The music you have heard is produced entirely by electricity. Each fundamental

tone is formed by the distinctive hum of an alternating dynamo. By combining, building up and superimposing the tones of several machines one upon the other, a musical note is produced, and by varying the selection of the over tones the distinctive timbre of any musical instrument can be reproduced, and, in fact, the tones of instruments that never have and never will exist. The enormous first cost of the plant and the complicated problem of transmission have prevented the commercial development of the idea until wireless transmission of power came along to release this supreme harmony from bondage. I expect within a short time to see the Tel-orchestrion displace every other form of music. Human fingers can never hope to acquire the power and flexibility of the electric current."

"But there is a pleasure in producing music quite apart from the pleasure of hearing it, don't you think so? If not, why do you devote time to the study of the violin?"

"What you say is true, Miss Huntington. There is a pleasure in producing good music,

and there will always be musicians who will study our known instruments for the pleasure their own performances give them, but I believe that the professional concert will soon be a thing of the past. We will all be amateurs, that is, those of us who are not discouraged by having the acme of perfection constantly before us."

"It is wonderful! certainly wonderful! But how can you install such a battery of machines on a ship like this? "

"The dynamos that generate these sounds, Miss Huntington, are hundreds of miles from here. The current is brought to the producer by wireless. There is a producer in your apartment. If you wish, I will show you how to operate it."

"Thank you, you are very kind."

"By the way, Miss Huntington, would you like to communicate with your father? It occurs to me that they are probably getting somewhat anxious about you at home."

Craig's remark suddenly recalled to Alice a fact which she had temporarily lost sight of, — she was a prisoner here. She had been

holding an intimate and friendly conversation with her jailer. Her anger rose swiftly at the thought, but diplomacy constrained her to control it. She replied simply:

“Is it possible?”

“Certainly. If the tones of a violin or an oboe can be transmitted for hundreds of miles, the tones of the human voice can be transmitted with equal facility. If you will go into your library I will give you the connection.”

Alice retired to the library. Hardly had she closed the intervening door when she heard a harsh, familiar grinding sound; then a strident voice, which seemed to come from the ceiling, inquired:—

“What number, Courtland?”

She was so startled that the question had to be repeated before she recovered her wits.

“What number, Courtland? Anything the matter with this line?”

“Oh, yes. No, I mean. Give me Broad 9763.”

“Hello, Broad! Give me 9763. What? All right.”

There was a pause for a moment, and then Alice heard a deep masculine voice which she immediately recognized as that of her father.

“Hello!”

“Oh, father! father, dear! It is I,— Alice. Listen to me.”

“Alice, what the d—! What does this mean? Where are you? Don’t you know that you have had us about distracted for the last two days? George has been sending a dozen times a day to learn if we have heard anything. The poor fellow is all broken up with —”

“Father, dear! Listen. I am a prisoner. I was chloroformed on the way home from the opera and carried on board a ship.”

“The infernal scoundrels! How did you get away? Where are you now?”

“I didn’t get away. We are at sea. Where, I do not know, except that we are apparently steering south. I am talking to you by wireless.”

“Wireless! Are you sure?”

“Positively. Listen, father. You must

send a warship after us. Send a fast one; the fastest there is. Yesterday we were chased by a liner, the *Prince Karl*, and we beat her to a froth."

"To a what?"

"I mean we distanced her completely. I signalled to her as she was passing."

"But what does it all mean? Who are the parties responsible for this?"

"There is only one man in it, his name is Craig."

"But what is his object? What does he want? Is he holding you for ransom? Find out his price. We must have you back at any cost."

"He is not after money. He — he says he loves me."

"Loves you! damn him! If I ever get my hands on him!"

"Father, you must not talk so. He is really rather remarkable; not at all the sort of person you would expect. If it was not for this wretched affair, and the fact that he angers me so, I think I might have liked him. He infuriated me so last night that I almost

'killed him. I stabbed at him with a paper-cutter.'

" Good! I wish you had."

" I am glad I didn't. It was horrible, and afterwards — "

" Well, enough of that; it will show him what stuff the Huntingtons are made of anyway."

" Father, you must use your influence to get a warship started after us at once. The boat is named the *Sabine*. She is a — "

" Finished? "

" Get off the line, Central, will you? I am talking."

" Well, your party has gone. What number were you talking with? "

" Broad 9763."

" Well, I will call you if I can get them."

Alice waited, but there was no further response. She stamped her foot in impotent rage. There was no bell to ring. Not even a hook to rattle. Evidently Craig had decided that she had communicated quite enough information and had broken the con-

nection. To control her indignation she selected a volume of Scott's from the bookshelves and tried to lose herself in the trials and tribulations of the fair Rebecca.

CHAPTER VII

A FLAG OF TRUCE

WHEN Alice appeared on deck the next morning it was long after sunrise. On her breakfast table she had found a great bunch of fresh violets and the New York papers of the day before. The *Sabine* had evidently slipped into some port under cover of the night. The papers were principally devoted to sensational accounts of her disappearance and the remarkable despatch which had come by wireless of the exciting but unsuccessful chase of a mysterious motor boat by the liner *Prince Karl*.

On rising Alice had unconsciously thrust the violets into her corsage, but their odour, recalling the big mass of flowers she was accustomed to receive daily from the Duke, made her aware of her action, and she removed them and placed them back on the table. And this man loved her, too. Well,

there was nothing unusual in that. She wondered at the thought occurring to her. So the Duke was inquiring a dozen times a day to see if anything had been learned regarding her whereabouts. She wondered idly if Craig, under similar conditions, would have confined himself to inquiries. But then Craig was an entirely different sort of person, she told herself. Suddenly she realized that she had been instituting comparisons. She flushed angrily and put on her jacket preparatory to going on deck. Why should Mr. Craig's actions under any circumstances have any possible interest for her? Why, indeed?

She reached the chart house just as the subject of these cogitations was finishing the task of taking the morning observation.

"We are in latitude 47° 50' north; longitude 76° 20' west," he announced casually as he stepped in from the deck. "I hope you rested well last night, Miss Huntington. Let us see how we are on the comparison." He stepped to the table as he spoke and turned a switch.

Alice instantly saw that the table top,

which she had supposed to be of oak, was, in reality, a heavy sheet of plate glass. Under it, and illuminated from beneath, was a large chart of the North Atlantic on the Mercator projection. The ocean was shown in deep blue, while the coast lines, parallels and meridians appeared as of white enamel. A zigzag white line with small white dots at intervals, which started from New York and ran in a general southerly direction to a point off Cape Hatteras, was terminated by a tiny luminous point. Craig consulted the chart attentively.

"Very good," he announced, "only six seconds out of the way. Are you interested in nautical devices, Miss Huntington? This is the telautographic chart. The tablet on which the *Sabine* automatically records her wanderings."

"It looks quite interesting," remarked Alice, "how is it operated?"

Craig made an adjustment to bring the pointer into coincidence with his observation and then replied:

"There is nothing particularly intricate in

the idea. It is merely the adaption of the telautograph to the wireless transmission of power. We have established two experimental stations to test its capabilities in the North Atlantic, one near Cape Henry and one on the coast of Spain. The current which we receive from each varies directly with the distance and acts on the solenoids which control the arms of the telautograph, causing the pointer to travel over the chart in precisely the same path that the *Sabine* travels over the ocean."

"How interesting. I should think that such a device perfected would put the professional navigator out of business."

"Not entirely. The cautious and careful commander would always want to check his telautographic position with an observation whenever possible, and, besides, even with a perfected device there would always be the error incident to the representation of the curved surface of the earth on a plane to be compensated for. However, it is a long way ahead of dead reckoning."

"I should think it would be. But if I am

not too curious I should like to know how you steer and control the craft. I can see no wheel or anything. I confess I am mystified."

"It is all very simple. You see our binnacle here? This pointer attached to the compass card and swinging with it acts through relays on the electrical steering apparatus. Whenever the pointer swings to one side or the other of the 'lubber's point,' it produces a corresponding correcting angle of the helm which brings the ship back on her course again. If you wanted to steer a course due south, as we are now, it is merely necessary to turn the pointer to the south point on the compass card, and the compass does the rest. The outer circumference is, as you see, adjusted to allow correction for the magnetic variation so that you can always steer a true course."

"But I always supposed that electric currents around a compass affected the needle."

"So they do; but the material of which this is made is a new discovery and under certain conditions is an absolute insulator to

electric fields, so that the compass needle is not affected."

"But you certainly would not trust the entire control of a ship to a device like that?"

"Why not? Of course in restricted waters steering would have to be done by hand, that is why the knob is provided on the after end of the pointer. In such case you would simply use the pointer as a wheel or any other steering device is used, but in the open ocean it is quite competent to take care of itself."

"But what would happen if you met another ship? You cannot expect everyone to get out of your way. There are rules of the road to be respected."

"We met a steamer yesterday. We were directly in her course, but there was no collision."

"That was luck and you were on deck to look out for it."

"No, Miss Huntington, it was not luck and I did not interfere. The emergency which you suggest is provided for, but I shall have to leave the explanation of it for another

time. From the looks of the barometer I should say that we are in for a storm."

As Alice looked through the windows of the pilot house she saw that the indications looked portentous. The few wisps of light, diaphanous, cirrus clouds of the preceding morning had concentrated in the south until a heavy, murky veil was formed which was rapidly mounting upward and obscuring the zenith. The wind was taking on force and weight with every puff, and the ocean was stirring with that restless, uneasy heave which indicates a distant commotion on its waters.

Craig had mounted to the fore-castle deck to study the signs of the weather, and as Alice watched him she could not but observe his alert, erect carriage, and the easy grace of his movements. Towering over six feet, his well proportioned, muscular figure did not give the impression of great size until one stood beside him. Physically, Alice was forced to admit, the Duke showed rather poorly in comparison. She caught herself up as she found her brain again drawing

parallels. There was a dominant personality about the man that compelled her attention in spite of herself. To escape from her reflections she stepped out on to the deck and joined him. The *Sabine* was driving through the swell with the smooth, gliding motion peculiar to the craft, throwing the water from either bow in great sheets of spray.

“ This is a most remarkable craft of yours, Mr. Craig; there is absolutely no motion to her. It is almost like riding on rails.”

Craig laughed. “ That is due to the steady-power of the gyrostats. In conducting laboratory experiments it is sometimes necessary to have a steady floor to work on. I had them installed to give her the necessary stability. The sea is rising fast, however. I am afraid that we shall not be able to keep them running much longer.”

As Craig spoke, the *Sabine* drove her nose into the side of a great green wall of water, which poured over the turtle-back deck and struck the breakwater in a solid mass of foam. The little craft shivered in all her parts. Craig hastily drew Alice within the

shelter of the chart house as the next green mountain came tumbling aft over the decks.

“That is what they would call down on Cape Cod ‘a Nantucket sleigh ride;’ they usually come in threes. I guess we shall have to ease her.”

Craig opened a cabinet and pulled several switches, and soon the *Sabine* was rising easily to the seas, riding them duck fashion instead of burying her nose in the side of each oncoming comber. When Craig went below to prepare dinner the motion had become so violent that Alice, good sailor though she was, was beginning to show the effects of it. She felt herself growing pale, and the awful sinking of her stomach warned her of what was coming. In an effort to stave off the inevitable she dragged herself to the after door of the chart house in the hope that the air would revive her.

Craig, returning, saw at a glance the situation. “I have to report that luncheon is served,” he announced formally.

“Luncheon! Oh, don’t mention it.”

“Are you not going to partake? The lob-

ster salad is fine, if I did make it myself, and the fried oysters are delectable."

"You are perfectly beastly. Please go away and let me alone."

"I don't suppose there is any illness that commands less sympathy than *mal de mer*," he laughed, "but I haven't any desire to torture you unnecessarily. I guess we will have to submerge."

"To what?"

"Submerge. Go below. Explore, if you will, the recesses of 'Davie Jones' Locker.'"

Craig closed a switch as he spoke, and instantly the three doors of the chart house slid into place. The springing of the panels showed that they were being forced into their sockets by an enormous pressure.

Alice, looking forward, saw the bows of the *Sabine* settle heavily into the crest of a wave. The next one drove over her and struck the chart house windows, a solid mass of water. The next enveloped them in a gloom from which they did not emerge.

Alice sprang to her feet in alarm.

"Do not be disturbed," said Craig, as he

switched on the light in the luminous ceiling, "there is no danger."

"But the windows! The glass will break!"

The panes were indeed buckling in, their rounded surfaces showing the extent of the pressure outside.

"That is not glass," replied Craig reassuringly. "Those windows have many times the strength of steel and the elasticity of pure India rubber. They would stretch until they filled this entire room before they would crack. We are only down about forty feet anyway," he continued, consulting the pressure gauge glass. "I will send her down about twenty feet more to be sure nothing hits us, and then we will have luncheon. Do you think you could eat something now?"

With submergence the disquieting motion of the *Sabine* entirely ceased. The wave disturbances of the most violent storm would never reach to the depth they had attained. Alice felt herself rapidly recovering from her indisposition.

“ How long is it possible to stay down? ” she inquired.

“ Oh, we could remain submerged for from twelve to twenty hours without resorting to the air flasks. By having recourse to our reserve supply it would be possible to remain submerged for several days, if necessary.”

Alice was reflecting on the possibility of being rescued from a craft that could distance a liner with ease and could sink to the unexplored depths of the ocean at will. She had to admit that the prospect did not appear rosy. Evidently it was to be a duel to the death between them, and the stronger spirit would win.

“ Would you like an opportunity to study the submarine world? ” Craig continued.

Alice expressed her assent and Craig shut off the light from the ceiling. For a moment they were shrouded in a black, impenetrable gloom, and then a long gleam of radiance, a dazzling beam or pencil of light shot out from the roof of the pilot house.

Standing beside Craig in the semi-gloom of the chart house, Alice looked down this

brilliant lane of light, and observed the movements of the curious denizens of the deep which were attracted by its glare. A school of frightened, flying fish, like a shower of silver spangles, came tumbling down the golden pathway, beating their frail bodies against the panes of the windows in a vain effort to escape their pursuing foes. Dog fish and many-hued dolphins shot swiftly by in pursuit. The great shadow of a huge hammerhead shark loafed casually across their path, nosing the railing of the pilot house with an inquisitive insouciance. A magnificent tarpon sheathed in his armour of silver plates flashed by them in a wanton burst of speed as if vaingloriously to show that in this element he alone was king.

Alice, absorbed in the contemplation of these wonders, suddenly felt something impending; the atmosphere seemed to have become tense and highly charged; her woman's intuition, that strange sixth sense of the feminine, had unaccountably taken alarm. Stepping quickly back she spoke in a sharp, staccato voice:—

“ Please, — Mr. Craig, — turn up the light, — I have seen enough.”

Craig complied immediately. He was unaccountably pale, and the hand which dropped from the switch trembled perceptibly.

As Alice retired to her apartment her heart was beating rapidly, and her smooth, white forehead was wrinkled in a thoughtful frown.

CHAPTER VIII

A PASSAGE AT ARMS

WHEN Craig entered the saloon that evening Alice was seated at the piano running desultorily through Raff's beautiful bit of tone-weaving, "The Spinning Song." She looked up as he entered.

"When are you going to take me back to New York?" she asked.

"When you decide to become Mrs. Gordon Craig instead of the Duchess of Buckminster."

Alice's lips tightened.

"I was beginning to hope that you were a gentleman in spite of the lawless nature of your occupation. I see you are not."

"Gentleman is a much abused term nowadays, Miss Huntington. I remember reading once that a gentleman was easily distinguished by the fact that he always and invariably wore kid gloves. If that were

true I certainly should merit your strictures."

"It pleases you to be facetious."

"At all events, Miss Alice, if I am not a gentleman I am at least a man and not a tailor's model."

"Neither is the Duke of Buckminster," replied Alice hotly.

"I did not suggest the Duke," smiled Craig, "but I see you have followed out the inference to its logical conclusion."

Fire smouldered in Alice's eyes.

"I had thought I was merely indifferent to you. I perceive that I am going to hate you," she replied slowly, and with conviction.

"It is quite possible that you may hate me. I think, however, that ultimately you will love me."

"Never!"

"You certainly will not remain indifferent."

"I shall never love you. *Never! Never!*"

"I see you appreciate the value of repetition in impressing a thought upon the subconscious mind. Would it be presuming in

me to inquire if your resolution requires such fortifying at this early stage of the proceedings? ”

“ You would be exasperating if you were not so trivial. Seriously, Mr. Craig, do you for a moment suppose that any woman would consider the proposals of a man of whom she knew absolutely nothing; to whom she had not even been introduced? ”

“ I introduced myself.”

“ And you introduced a number of other objectionable features into my life at the same time.”

“ Among which are? ”

“ Constraint, confinement, and not the least, the affliction of having to listen to your sentimentalities.”

“ I am glad you did not include the loss of the society of his Grace of Buckminster in your list.”

“ I have told you that that is a subject in which you can have no possible concern.”

“ Not now. I dismissed his Lordship from my scheme of things the moment we struck blue water. In less than a month you will

find that you have done the same. Indeed, I will wager that you have not thought of him to-day."

Alice's eyes blazed in suppressed fury. It was indeed true. In the crowding events of the last forty-eight hours the Duke had been almost obliterated from her thoughts.

"I see by the papers," went on Craig easily, "that the strain is proving too much for his Grace. His physicians have ordered him to Florida on a shooting trip to escape the worry and the reporters. Looks rather like retreating under fire, but I suppose the delicate sensibilities of the scion of nobility must be protected at all costs."

Alice bit her lip, but remained silent.

"To return to the subject of introductions," Craig continued, "if that is the only thing which stands in the way of a better understanding, I will relieve your mind by informing you that I was formally presented to you at the Embassy Ball in Washington three years ago, when you were having your first introduction into society. I recall that on that momentous occasion you regarded me

with the same personal and vivid interest that you extended to the figures on the tapestry hangings."

"You apparently received all the consideration you deserved," replied Alice icily.

"All that you thought I deserved, at any rate. My name was not emblazoned in the bright lexicon of society in those days."

"Nor is now, nor ever shall be."

"Probably not. I support the affliction with commendable equanimity, however. At any rate, it was on that occasion I determined that you should be my wife."

"Apparently you have lost nothing in presumption in the interval. You will have ample time in the future to reconsider your determination."

"I shall not reconsider it. On the contrary, I reiterate it with emphasis and conviction. You *shall* be my wife."

"I beg to assure you that you are quite mistaken," replied Alice coldly. "I shall never be your wife. You seem to think, Mr. Craig, that all you have to do is to strike the dominant chord and I will fill in the harmony

to any theme you may choose to elaborate."

"Harmony," rejoined Craig, with lifted eyebrows, "I fear your present conception of harmony is rather Wagnerian. Your suggestion of the power of the dominant chord is a good one, however. I hope the time will soon come when the dominant chord in your life, the one that draws you the strongest, will be the one which draws you to me."

"Really, Mr. Craig, for a pirate, a bold buccaneer, a lawless sailor of the seas, a captor of weak and defenceless women, you are growing tiresome, positively tiresome. With your permission I will retire. I wish to see if your library contains anything that is really thrilling."

Craig watched her go with eyes that openly proclaimed their admiration. Then he selected a cigar from the casket on the table and bending over his drafting board was soon absorbed in the profound study of the drawing which was growing under his hand.



CHAPTER IX

A DISCOVERY AND AN ADVENTURE

It was at an unusually early hour that Alice appeared on deck the following morning. The sun had hardly risen from his ocean bed, and the last black shadows had not wholly disappeared below the western horizon, when she appeared in the observation house. She had hoped to forestall Craig and have an hour or two to rummage among the mysteries of this most mysterious chart room, but on looking out on to the deck she saw that he had already preceded her. He was standing at the rail looking idly astern, as though he were waiting for something. Alice noticed that a short boat-boom with a bronze ball on the end had been rigged out from the starboard gangway. A boat-crane was also in place at the rail, ready for use. Alice's curiosity was at once aroused.

Craig was apparently expecting someone,

but whom? Not a vessel was in sight. Not even the shadow of the land loomed on the horizon. As she stood within the shelter of the chart house watching, the deep tones of the cathedral chimes came faintly to her ears. Craig evidently heard them too, for he began to overhaul the tackle of the boat-crane. The sound of the bells was repeated at intervals, each time louder and louder. It seemed as if they must be steering straight for some invisible campanile.

Alice involuntarily glanced over her shoulder towards the bows, as if she half-expected to see the spires and pinnacles of some Gothic cathedral rising up out of the deep. As she followed Craig's glance astern she suddenly saw a dark green object break through a wave on the starboard quarter, its rounded sides glistening like a porpoise in the level rays of the sun. In a moment, in spite of the speed at which the *Sabine* was travelling, it was alongside, gliding quietly under the end of the boat-boom as if it were attached to the bronze knob on its extremity by a strong, but invisible thread. Alice could now see that

the object was a large cigar-shaped cylinder like a torpedo.

Craig swung out the boat-crane, and the powerful electro-magnet, at the end of the fall, soon clapped on to a plate on the back of the torpedo and it was quickly swung in board and lowered through a sliding hatch-way in the deck.

Having made everything secure, Craig turned to enter the chart house. He gave a start of surprise as he saw Alice standing there. Then he laughed good-humouredly. "You are an early riser this morning, Miss Huntington, but you see, as usual, the earlier bird has gathered the worm. I see you have solved for yourself the mystery of fresh flowers and the morning papers."

"I seem to have solved something, but I don't know exactly what that something is."

"That was our supply train which you saw coming on board, the elusive and invisible line of communication which links us to civilization."

"Is it permissible to ask how it is done?"

“Certainly. The torpedo is in reality a small submersible like the *Sabine*, and her motors are run by the same system of wireless transmission. As speed is the principal consideration, the entire lower half of the shell is given up to the motive power, while the upper part is divided into compartments for carrying supplies, an ice box, fireless cooker, etc. The device is set to run about fifty feet below the surface so as not to interfere with any vessel, and the speed developed is often as high as one hundred miles per hour. Its position is indicated and controlled at our laboratories by an adaption of the principle of the wireless telautograph until it comes within range of our detector, and then we do the rest. My boys in New York have orders to despatch one every morning, so if there is any particular commission you would like to have executed I can have it attended to for you.”

“Thank you, you are very kind, but you speak of the detector; pray what may that be?”

“That is the device which takes care of

the emergency you were worrying about yesterday. But if I should stop to explain it to you, your breakfast would be seriously delayed, and a woman without her breakfast is more dangerous than a live wire charged with ten thousand volts alternating. If you will excuse me I will descend to the galley and start Bridget about her duties."

"Do not call it the galley, please," protested Alice; "if you do I shall never be able to eat a thing. The word galley always suggests grease and potato peelings to me. I suppose I must have gathered the impression from W. Clark Russell or some of those writers of sea tales. I think pantry sounds much better, don't you?"

"All right, Highness, pantry it shall be, now, henceforth and for ever after. I did not suppose it made any difference whether the panter panted in the pantry or the galley slave grubbed in the galley, so long as we got something to eat. Is it also your pleasure that the scuttle-butt shall hereafter be known as the aqua reservoir?"

"It might sound more euphonious."

“ And is it also your pleasure that your humble servant shall be called — blessed? ”

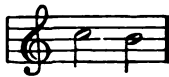
“ It seems to me that you are forgetting your sage and recent pronunciamento in regard to the live wire. If you really are going to get breakfast I should advise you to go and get it, and not stand there all the morning talking nonsense.”

Craig laughed, and after casting a careful glance around the horizon, descended the stairway to the saloon, and Alice soon heard him busily engaged with his pans and broilers.

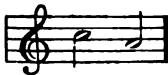
She was secretly elated to have him go. She would now have a long half hour to delve into the mysteries of this most cryptic craft on which she was confined. She could hear her jailer whistling away as he worked in the galley beneath. Apparently he had not a care in the world.

And she herself, were her feelings such as would naturally be expected under the circumstances? She had to admit that they were not. As she stood there gazing idly at the swinging compass card, and pondering on

the strangeness of her situation, and the mental incertitude which it seemed to have engendered, the sound of the cathedral chimes again came faintly to her ears, — two sweet, sonorous strokes :



On the edge of the ground glass surface of the compass card under her unseeing, introspective eye there appeared a tiny spot of light. Alice watched it, fascinated, as it moved slowly and diagonally across the card towards the centre. It must have something to do with the management of the yacht, but what? As the spot of light approached the southeast point on the compass card, the bells which had continued to sound at intervals suddenly changed their song.



Alice felt that she was on the verge of a discovery, but what could it be? The detector! The thought darted through her brain like a flash. Instantly she raised her eyes and looked out through the pilot house

windows. Sure enough! Broad on the port bow and in a direct line with the tiny spot of light on the compass card the tall white sides of a steamer glistened in the sun above the horizon. The ship, though distant, was approaching at good speed and would evidently pass within a mile. Alice watched her with a vivid and personal interest. Could it be possible that here at last was an opportunity to escape? She saw the detail of the stranger's hull and rigging gradually grow and develop under her gaze; saw the figures of men upon her bridge; the flash of the sun upon her pilot house windows, and the broad, red band with its white, diamond-shaped lozenge on her yellow funnel. It was one of the fast fruit steamers which ply between Boston and the Jamaican ports.

Here was a possibility of rescue, faint, it is true, but still a possibility. If Craig would only remain below, she might perhaps get close enough to signal. Suddenly she noticed that the *Sabine*, in some unaccountable manner, was gradually edging away from the stranger. The tiny pinpoint of light

was no longer approaching the centre of the compass card, but seemed to be sliding off toward the edge. As she noticed this phenomenon, the chimes, which had been repeating their warning louder and more insistent as the fruiter approached, now added another measure to their admonitory peal —



On the southwest edge of the compass card, in a position corresponding with the first, appeared a second spot of light. Alice turned her head and scanned the ocean in the new direction, but nothing was in sight. Nothing but a low lying bank of fog on the starboard bow about five miles distant. As she looked at it she observed that the vapour was curiously piled up in three regularly disposed cones which seemed to be slowly moving across the surface of the main fog bank like a triple row of pyramids endowed with mobility.

As Alice paused momentarily to watch this strange freak of the fog and the air currents,

the bowsprit and flying jibboom of a coasting schooner poked its way out of the murky veil and was leisurely followed by the remainder of the fabric. The clinging wreaths of vapour streamed backward from her shrouds and rigging like shreds of cannon smoke, while her three topsails, which had presented the appearance of moving pyramids above the fog, gleamed whitely in the sunlight as they gently bellied under the breath of the early morning breeze. The schooner was hauled up close to the wind on the port tack, and was pointing directly for the *Sabine*. The fruit steamer also, Alice noticed, had changed her course slightly and was now heading straight for the yacht.

The two vessels were approaching the *Sabine* along the sides of an isosceles triangle of which the motor boat was the apex. The schooner, though moving slowly, was very much the nearer of the two. Alice noticed that the yacht had ceased to edge away from the approaching steamer and was evidently trying to pass between the two vessels, though there was a hesitancy and incertitude

about her movements which had not been present before.

The steering pointer trembled and oscillated as if it was in the grip of two powerful contending forces whose opposition produced nothing but an unstable and precarious inertia.

The three converged rapidly. Alice's hopes were running high. If the conditions held for five minutes more she would be within signalling distance. Suddenly as she watched, she saw the bows of the schooner swing sluggishly up into the wind. The head sails shivered for a moment and then slowly filled away on the other tack. Alice felt as if she could cry with vexation and disappointment. The tacking of the schooner had evidently destroyed the state of unstable equilibrium between the forces which controlled the *Sabine's* movements, for, as the bows of the schooner fell away on the other tack, the steering pointer suddenly swung half way round the card. The yacht swept about in a short circle to starboard and was soon rapidly scurrying away from her inquisitive

neighbour in white, while the old hooker loafed contentedly on her way northward, apparently unconscious of the part she had played in the drama.

Alice watched her hopes receding into the distance with bitterness and chagrin. The *Sabine* was travelling at a speed which was rapidly leaving the fruiter astern, fast steamer though she was. Evidently nothing short of a warship could catch this wonderful craft. She heard Craig whistling away cheerily in the pantry as he laboured at his task of preparing the breakfast.



The dying notes of the chimes sang out a song of triumph and farewell. The *Sabine* seemed endowed with an uncanny, almost human intelligence. Alice bit her lips in helpless, impotent rage. Must she stand there a passive spectator while her hope of succour vanished before her very eyes? No! Setting her teeth tightly she stretched out a hand and grasped the knob on the end of the

steering pointer. The *Sabine* responded to the touch like a well-trained steed. Swinging the pointer to the right Alice caused the yacht to circle to starboard, and in another moment she was approaching the steamer, much more rapidly than she had previously been leaving her astern.

But the alarm bells had again taken up their warning peal. If she could only stop their eternal clangour. She looked about for some switch that might control them, but found none. She wondered that Craig did not appear upon the scene, but the rattle of pots and pans below went merrily on. If she could only get near enough, she determined, as a last desperate resort, to throw herself overboard, trusting to her splendid swimming powers to keep her afloat until a boat could be lowered to rescue her.

The strange movements of the motor boat had evidently produced a commotion on the steamer, for Alice could see that her rail was lined with excited heads, while the group of officers on her bridge were regarding her intently through their telescopes. Five min-

utes — three minutes — one minute — one short minute more would bring her alongside.

The clamour of the alarm bells had now become deafening and incessant. The *Sabine* was cutting through the water like a thing of life. The excited passengers on the fruiter were leaning over the rail cheering and waving encouragement to her. Alice, lost to everything, was bending over the controller with flashing eyes, all her powers concentrated in the one thought, to place the yacht as close alongside the steamer as possible.

The *Sabine* was now within one hundred yards and going like the wind. On Alice's tongue was trembling a cry of triumph when — in the fingers which grasped the knob of the steering pointer a strange, prickling sensation commenced, as though the hand were asleep. The feeling quickly spread up through her arm to the shoulder. A powerful electric current was flowing through her body.

The strength of the current quickly in-

creased, and now it came in pulsating waves, causing her hand and arm to twitch and jump convulsively, and every joint in her body to creak and ache with the stiffness of extreme age. Could she hold on another moment? Alice set her teeth and wrapped her handkerchief around the knob of the controller, but the filmy square of lace, quickly permeated with the moisture from her excited fingers, afforded her no protection. Suddenly a powerful shock, which almost brought her to her knees, caused her to release her hold and stagger back against the wall of the chart house with a stifled cry. As she did so she saw Craig standing half way up the stairway, one hand grasping the railing, the other thrust into the bosom of his soft flannel shirt.



CHAPTER X

EXPLANATIONS

THE instant that Alice released her hold upon the controller things began to happen. The steering arrow swung around until it pointed directly away from the steamer. The speed controller slid back along the arm and struck the stop at the after end with a sharp metallic click. From below came the roar and thunder of a hundred cataracts. The *Sabine* spun around like a thoroughbred at the barrier, burying her rail until her decks were awash. For a moment it seemed as if she were going to turn turtle entirely, but she quickly righted herself and leaped forward like a projectile from a gun. The sea seemed actually to smoke as she hurled herself through it. Craig sprang to the controller and slowed the yacht down to a normal rate of speed, then turned to face his captive. Alice was crouching on the leather covered divan eyeing him defiantly.

“ So you thought you would take charge of the ship in the absence of the captain,” he remarked banteringly. “ Do you know that such an act constitutes mutiny on the high seas? ”

“ I neither know nor care. I am not subject to your control. I shall fight you with whatever weapons come to my hand.”

Craig regarded her a moment with open admiration. “ I believe you,” he remarked finally. “ There is an old proverb which I see I shall have to remember in future: ‘ When the cat’s away the mice will play.’ ”

“ You certainly are a cat. You have proved your willingness and ability to show your claws when the occasion requires.”

“ A cat! I thought that term was appropriated by and applied exclusively to the fair sex.”

“ Perhaps it is. I am inclined to think that tiger would be the more appropriate characterization, anyway.”

“ Surely not that; you could not compare me with anything so cruel and carnivorous.”

“ Why not? You seem to be capable of anything.”

“ If I were a tiger, liking you as I do, I might want to eat you.”

“ I am not so sure that you are absolutely incapable even of that. It is said that a sultan of Sulu once had a wife he was so fond of that he ate her,” replied the girl.

“ Your parallel falls down in one essential particular, but perhaps we can remedy that in time.”

“ And perhaps not. I think we will preserve the point of divergence in order to prevent it from becoming a parallel in reality.”

Craig leaned against the pedestal of the controller and regarded her for some moments critically. “ Speaking of eating reminds me,” he said at length, “ that—in the language of polite society—‘ breakfast is served.’ Will you partake of it here in my company just to show that there are no hard feelings? ”

“ Certainly not. While I am forced to

remain on board this ship I prefer to take my meals in private."

"Really, Miss Huntington, that is not fair. 'To the victor belongs the spoils,' you know. (The spoiled child I guess it is in this case.) The Huntingtons have always been good losers. Your father won out in the end by being a good loser in the beginning."

"If I thought that history would repeat itself I might reconsider."

"Please do."

Alice hesitated. She was really very angry, but at the same time she was also very curious. In the end curiosity prevailed.

"I will, on one condition," she announced finally.

"What is it?"

"That you explain the thing to me; tell me how it works."

"I would explain the entire solar system to you in exchange for a happiness so great," cried Craig, radiant with boyish enthusiasm.

"May I serve it here?"

"I suppose so, since you are so persistent."

Craig touched a spring and Alice's breakfast table ascended on the dumb-waiter through a concealed trap in the floor. It bore its accustomed burden of gleaming silver, linen and glass, and was set and laid for two. Craig had evidently anticipated his victory.

Alice bit her lip in vexation, but it was too late to draw back, so she decided to ignore the circumstance. Craig rolled the table over to a position in front of the divan and, seating himself on the opposite side of the angle which it formed, proceeded to serve the strawberries and grapefruit which he had prepared with all the suppressed delight of a school boy out with his first sweetheart.

The fruit steamer was by this time some five miles astern and heading northward again. She was evidently aware of the uselessness of trying to catch Craig's elusive and slippery craft.

Alice took a sip of her coffee and then settled herself back against the cushions.

"You may begin now," she said.

"Begin! Begin what?"

"Why, your explanations, of course. The detector, what is it? How does it work?"

"Oh, bother the detector," cried Craig petulantly. "Let us enjoy our breakfast and leave explanations until afterward."

Alice laid down her napkin and rose decisively to her feet.

"Don't, please don't," pleaded Craig. "The omelet will get cold and you will spoil everything."

"A bargain is a bargain," she replied firmly.

"Well, if you must, you must, I suppose. I thought it could wait until after the breakfast had been disposed of, though."

Alice reseated herself with dignity, "Go on," she commanded.

"What do you want to know?"

"I want to know about the detector. How it works. I want to know what prevents the *Sabine* from running down the first craft that crosses her path. I want to know—everything."

“ Well, I must say you are moderate in your demands. Do you expect me to elucidate all this within the compass of a single breakfast hour? ”

“ That ought not to seem a stupendous task for one who, a moment ago, was willing to explain the workings of the entire universe; but you may begin with the detector, and your collision-preventing device, and then I shall be able to judge how long it will take you to explain the entire cosmos.”

“ Oh, well,” said Craig resignedly, “ you want to know how we prevent collisions; it is very simple. You know, of course, that every ship is the centre and core of a magnetic field, whose strength varies according to the size of the mass. Practically every ship of to-day is of iron or steel, and in the few rare cases of wooden vessels there is still enough iron entering into their construction to affect our exceedingly delicate instruments. You remember the knob on the after end of the steering arrow which became so hot just now? Well, as soon as that knob

enters one of these magnetic fields it is attracted towards the object from which the field emanates, and the attraction deflects the steering arrow in a greater or less degree, as it is strong or weak. Now, as the magnetic attraction of the compass needle for the pole is always striving to bring the pointer back to the course, and as the attraction from the disturbing field of the distant vessel is continually trying to deflect it, we have a parallelogram of forces whose resultant will be the course which the *Sabine* steers. As the attraction of the compass needle is constant, and as the attraction of the approaching vessel varies directly with the distance, it is possible to adjust the instrument so that the presence of a distant ship will produce very little, if any, departure from the true course, but if a vessel should get so near as to overcome the pull of the compass entirely, then the steering arrow would be swung around so as to point directly from her, and the *Sabine* would at once show her her heels."

"But suppose it did not work?" asked

Alice. "So delicate a device is susceptible of derangement surely?"

"I perceive that you must have every condition satisfied," laughed Craig. "That is where the detectors come in. It is not sufficient that the *Sabine* should be able to avoid automatically any craft she may meet. It is also desirable that her captain should know when any vessels are in sight. For that purpose we have a series of separate needles mounted in the base of the pedestal called the micro-detectors. These are arranged to come into action successively, and the presence of a mass of iron or steel of the bulk of a ship will attract one of these needles at a distance of over twenty miles. Each needle carries on its point a tiny electric light which is arranged to slide toward the centre of the arm as the attractive force increases, and which throws its light up from below on to the compass card. It is only necessary to arrange an audible signal to show when these needles are deflected to provide for every possible emergency."

“ And the chime bells are your audible signal? ” interrupted Alice.

“ Precisely. That is an idea of my own,” replied Craig with a whimsical smile. “ Being of a somewhat æsthetic turn of mind I object to having my nerves torn and jangled by the sound of harsh and strident gongs or whistles every time the *Sabine* happens to meet a stranger on the highway of the nations. By taking advantage of the flexible qualities of the Tel-orchestron we have constructed a set of cathedral bell tones with a range of two octaves. This is connected electrically with the needles of the detectors, and small producers are located in various parts of the vessel. When one of the needles is deflected a bell-like tone is given forth from the producers and the interval of that tone as compared with the treble ‘ C ’ of the scale, which is struck immediately before it indicates the amount of deflection. I have divided my two octaves among the sixteen principal points of bearing, which, with the addition of a sharp in each scale, gives an individual note to each point so that the

presence of a strange ship is not only announced, but her position audibly indicated, as well as being shown on the compass card and on the various telltales."

"It is perfectly evident to me, Mr. Craig, that you have mistaken your vocation," remarked Alice with conviction. "Anyone who could originate an idea like that is wasting his time in the bold and nefarious occupation of a pirate. You ought to be—well, I don't know just where your peculiar qualifications would best fit."

"They seem to fit here pretty well. At least it appears so to me."

"That is purely masculine self-appreciation. The field here is too limited for your talents. You should head for New York at once. Come, let us turn the steering arrow north. They are looking for just such a man as you there."

"I suppose you mean the authorities are looking for me. No, Miss Huntington, I am afraid it won't do just yet, and besides, it would bring us back in time for a certain

ceremony which at present is indefinitely postponed."

"You seem to have a genius for bringing up disagreeable subjects," said Alice, dropping at once her tone of badinage.

"I am glad the subject has become a disagreeable one. There is certainly a ray of hope in that."

"The subject is not a disagreeable one. It is the discussion of it with you that is disagreeable."

"Well, I am willing to substitute anything else you wish. Suppose we discuss the rising prospects of a humble engineer, one Gordon Craig by name."

"You are conceited, Mr. Craig, absolutely conceited, and I detest conceit even in a pirate. I am going out on deck to enjoy some of this invigorating morning air, and if you have anything to do I advise you to go and do it."



CHAPTER XI

A MOMENT OF MADNESS

AFTER Craig and the breakfast table had silently and unobtrusively disappeared below, Alice drew a steamer rug carelessly about her and ensconced herself in a bamboo reclining chair which her captor had thoughtfully placed for her under the awning at the stern.

The day was one of those rare ones which is sometimes encountered in February on the edge of the tropics. The breath of the ocean was like old wine and the razor edge of the horizon stood out sharp and clear, so close that it seemed as if one might almost reach out and touch it with his hand.

Alice had found a well-thumbed leather-covered copy of the Iliad on one of the divans in the chart house, and she was soon absorbed in the struggles of the "well greaved Greeks" against the hosts of Priam, the

clash of spear upon buckler and the thunder of contending war chariots.

Crafts of all kinds came up out of the south and passed them, heralded always more or less insistently by the warning bells of the detector. Only one, a large tramp steamer with a gridiron of wireless antennæ strung between her masts, seemed to give them any special attention, but the *Sabine* slipped away from her so rapidly that she soon turned her prow northward again.

Alice scarcely noticed these interruptions; she had ceased to hope for any assistance except from some of the fast scouts of the first cruiser squadron, which she knew by this time must be on the lookout for them.

A battleship passed them going north, evidently detached from the fleet, which was at target practice off Guantanamo, but she was so distant that Alice could only make out her funnels and the two towers of her skeleton masts.

For over an hour the sonorous, well-rounded periods of the *Iliad* held her attention enchained, until, tiring at length of the

martial exploits of the fiery Hector and the god-like Achilles, she closed the book on her lap and gave herself up to reverie. The smooth gliding motion of the *Sabine* soothed her senses and quieted her nerves until she stretched herself out luxuriously in her chair and then curled up among the cushions like a kitten basking sleepily in the sunshine. The strain of the last few weeks in New York had worn on her more than she was aware of, and the rest and relaxation she was beginning to find on the *Sabine* were tonics which she needed more than perhaps she herself would have been willing to admit.

In this idle retrospective mood she let her thoughts, for perhaps the first time since she had been immured in her present floating prison, drift back to the scenes she had so recently quitted. The picture of the Duke banished to Florida to escape notoriety and the reporters caused her to smile understandingly. Should not she of all others appreciate the hypersensitive nature of her titled wooer? She idly wondered what sort of a man George would have been had he

lived in the strenuous times of which she had just been reading, when a man had to win his wife by the strength of his arm and the length of his sword, and no rank was valid which could not be maintained with spear and shield in the forefront of the battle. She tried to imagine him garbed in sandals, corslet and helmet, with waving horsehair plume, but the effort was too great and only produced a smile. Craig, she could easily picture, his gray eyes gleaming from beneath a brazen vizor, but the Duke, — that was different. Her sense of humour prevented her from pursuing her thoughts further in that direction. George was eminently not of the fighting type, although he had served his country manfully and well during the closing days of the war in South Africa, and had achieved the distinction of going through the last campaign with only three steamer trunks and four body servants. Whether he ever arrived within sight-distance of the embattled Boers she did not know, but that did not matter. The good old days when warriors stood knee to knee,

buckler to buckler, gazing into each other's glowing eyes through their barred and fluted vizors while they hacked and hewed away with short sword, or *martel-de-fer*, were gone never to return. The modern fighting man now murders his fellow secretly and by stealth at ranges of from one to seven miles, without even a puff of smoke to tell from whence the fatal messenger comes. War is indeed stripped of its pomp and glamour.

The tide of her reflections was interrupted by the march of the trumpets from Aida, sounded by the Tel-orchestrion producer in the chart house as a signal that luncheon was ready. Glancing at her watch she saw that it was one-thirty. Craig had not appeared. Encouraged by his success of the morning, she had anticipated that he would try to secure her company at luncheon, and she had mentally planned a courteous but firm refusal to his plea, but nothing of the kind occurred. Looking through the door into the chart house she saw that her table was once more standing by the trap door of

the lift. It was set and laid for one. Evidently Craig had not thought of pursuing his advantage at present.

Alice was secretly piqued and annoyed. She wished to even up the score, but apparently she was not soon to have the opportunity.

It was late in the afternoon before her jailer finally appeared. He had evidently been working hard, for his usually immaculate hands were stained with carbon ink, and his hair looked as if his fingers had been frequently run through it. Alice received him with a chilling reserve which she thought appropriate to the occasion.

"It is evident, Mr. Craig, that your duties as host and jailer do not extend to, or include, providing entertainment for your guests, or prisoners, whichever you choose to call them."

"Entertainment! I thought you were deeply engrossed when I glanced out on the deck this morning. Had I thought my presence could have added anything to your happiness I should have hastened to your side."

"It could not. Happiness is quite out of the question when one is a prisoner, but even the study of the more inferior forms of animal life serve to pass away the time when one has nothing but a painted sky and a painted ocean to gaze upon."

"Thank you for the compliment implied. I am sorry you find confinement growing irksome. You may put an end to it at any time you wish, however."

"I! How?"

"By cancelling your engagement with the Duke of Buckminster and substituting in his stead one who really cares for you."

"Thank you. There are some things that one instinctively prefers imprisonment to."

"I am sorry you feel that way. However, in the end the strongest thing will win. If love is not the strongest thing it won't win, and it ought not to win. I think it will win, however."

"Mr. Craig, are you a fighting man?"

"I? Certainly not. I am by birth, training and inclination an engineer. War is destruction, and the constructive tempera-

ment is always and unalterably opposed to the destructive. I have at times been obliged to take up the rifle during some of the troubles on the Isthmus and elsewhere, but I am always ready to quit when the other fellow is."

"I don't understand how one of your peaceful and conciliatory trend of mind ever expected to gain anything in a woman's estimation by resorting to force. You seem to lack the courage of your convictions. Having commenced in that manner it would seem to be the part of consistency to carry out your conquest along similar lines."

"Because one is obliged to use force occasionally it does not necessarily follow that he must do so always to be consistent. Napoleon and even Alexander himself sheathed the sword at times. One may use force to win his opportunity, but one does not use force to win love itself, because the result would not be love but something else. However, could I win the love I want in that way, I would take you as ruthlessly as ever Roman legionary wooed a Sabine maid."

"You would not dare."

"Dare? Dare is a dangerous word to use to a man with red blood in his veins."

They were standing by the door of the chart house; for a moment she looked at him, scorning — taunting. Craig paled slightly; in his gray eyes danger lights were leaping.

The next instant Alice felt herself swept into his arms. For one wild, mad moment she was crushed against him. For one supreme heart-beat she thrilled to the passion of his lips pressed full upon hers.

Then panting, dishevelled, defiant, she felt herself released. Craig was looking at her with white face and burning eyes.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" she cried, every fibre of her outraged womanhood clamouring for expression.

For a moment she gazed at him; then turning, fled swiftly along the deck, her one unreasoning impulse being to place as much space between herself and her captor as possible.

She had almost reached the taffrail before

Craig divined her purpose. His already pallid face turned ashen. Hastily thrusting his hand into his pocket he pressed one of the remote control switches which he always carried about him, one designed to turn a heavy current of electricity into the guard rail as a protection against possible intruders.

Alice's flying form was already in the air. In another moment she would have been in the water, battered, bruised, and broken by the powerful jets that were forcing the *Sabine* along at express train speed; but, as she rose to the leap, as her outstretched hands touched the railing, the powerful electric current shunted through her body. Like a bird shot on the wing, like the deer stricken in full career, her body crumpled up in mid-air, and with a choking moan she fell limp and senseless to the deck.

CHAPTER XII

A DECLARATION OF WAR

WHEN Alice recovered consciousness she found herself lying on a divan in the chart room. Craig was bending anxiously over her chafing her hands and wrists. From the marks of his fingers on her arms, and the leather cushion which was placed uncomfortably beneath her shoulders, she knew that he had been resorting to artificial respiration to resuscitate her.

“How do you feel now?” he asked in a voice from which he vainly tried to exclude the emotion.

Alice was too weak to answer. She could only look at him with unspeakable loathing.

Craig, seeing that she was not likely to relapse again into unconsciousness, hurried below and quickly returned with a liqueur glass filled with brandy, which he poured between her unresisting lips. The powerful

liquor soon revived her sufficiently so that she was able to sit up propped against the cushions he placed for her.

"How do you feel?" he again asked anxiously.

Alice gazed at him scornfully for a full moment before replying.

"How do I feel?" and she laughed bitterly. "How should you expect me to feel? You have violated me, insulted me, killed me, almost,—how should you expect me to feel?"

"I could not help it; there was no other way. If you had gone overboard you would inevitably have been lost."

"You could not help degrading me either, I suppose. You could not help subjecting me to the indignities you would force upon any ignorant and helpless girl that fate threw into your power."

"But you drove me to it."

"I drove you to it! And I also drove you to your first attack upon my happiness? I drove you into this mad enterprise you have embarked upon, I suppose."

“ Indirectly, yes. You have never known a passionate love; you do not realize the desperate lengths it will force a man to.”

“ And I drove you to it, did I? Well, I will drive you to a good many other things before we are done with each other. Why don't you go on as you have begun? Why don't you complete your nefarious work? I am quite in your power.”

“ Alice, this is unjust. You know you have nothing to fear from me.”

“ Fear from you! I do not fear you, I merely hate you. Hate you with an all-consuming hatred that will never die. I shall live henceforth only to see you suffer. And you *shall* suffer. You shall pay for the ravishing of my lips in the sweat of your soul. You shall know desire, fierce, intense, consuming desire that shall make your days a misery and your nights a horror. Desire that shall grow and burn unceasingly, that shall never be realized, never satiated, never satisfied.”

“ I know it now,” replied Craig gravely.

“ You know it now? ” Alice looked at

him long and searchingly out of her hollow, burning eyes. Then she turned her face to the pillow with a wild, hysterical laugh. "You know it now! What you know is nothing."

"You are overwrought and unstrung," replied Craig gravely. "Won't you drink this that I have prepared for you? It will quiet your nerves."

"I will do anything if you will only go away. If you will only leave me."

Alice drained the cup which he placed to her lips and turned her face again to the pillows, while Craig lighted a cigar and passed moodily out upon the deck.

On returning to the chart room half an hour later he found her sleeping as quietly and peacefully as a child. Picking her up in his strong arms he carried her below and deposited her gently on one of the couches in the library. Then throwing a light slumber robe over her he went quietly out and closed the door.

In the days that followed Craig had good reason to feel that Alice had not forgotten

her threat. The whole nature of the girl seemed changed and transformed. The haughty, supercilious, and somewhat frivolous society girl was gone, and in her place he found a woman wise in the wisdom of the world, fully conscious of the power of her sex, and an adept in applying this power to accomplish the results she aimed at. All the arts of a Circe, of a Calypso, seemed latent in her nature, all the allurements with which Cleopatra enchained the rough and soldierly Anthony; all the fascinations with which DuBarry bound to herself the monarch of France; all the languishing loveliness with which Helen of Troy wrought the ruin of men and accomplished the destruction of a happy and prosperous people, she brought to bear upon the object of her vengeance.

So rapid and kaleidoscopic were the changes in her moods that the slower moving masculine mind could hardly tell where one began and the other left off. At times she would dazzle him with an assumption of frank comradeship and interest, drawing him on to talk of his plans and aspirations

only to dash him, in the height of his enthusiasm, to the ground with some cynical comment or sudden recurrence of cold indifference.

In raiment she bewildered him with the diversity and beauty of her gowns, and she never ceased to thank the fates that had placed this most powerful weapon in her hands. In her task of self-adornment she often had cause to thank fortune for her long arms and Yankee ingenuity, but as time went on and she became expert with practice, she missed the services of her maid much less than a short time before she would have believed possible. She would spend whole hours on a toilet that Craig would but catch a glimpse of as she swept through the saloon or passed him in the chart house. She would gladden his eyes with jaunty walking suits that displayed to perfection her superb young figure, fascinate them with voluminous and lacy morning gowns of which he would catch but a glimpse as she selected a book from the shelves in the saloon; madden them with filmy, clinging evening gowns which

revealed her round, white arms and gleaming alabaster shoulders to his hungry gaze, leaving him always restless, dissatisfied, unsatisfied.

Well knowing the power of her voice she would seat herself in the evening at the piano, when she knew that Craig was working in his laboratory, and croon away in her deep, rich contralto some tender Polish love song, some haunting Biscayan berceuse, until Craig, his soul in his eyes, would be drawn to the door, when she would rise from the stool with a wicked, malicious, little laugh and go on deck, leaving her victim, his brain in a turmoil and work impossible.

The boundaries of her caprice were limitless. At one moment she would overpower him with her graciousness and the frank acceptance of his society; in the next she would become as cold and inaccessible as some remote, snow-capped peak of the Himalayas. She would fan and feed the flames of his passion with every art known to the coquette and the courtesan, watching with malignant satisfaction to see his lips grow

white as her skirts brushed past him in the passageway, or the tension of his muscles when she came and innocently stood beside him at the rail, so close that he could feel the warmth of her, and inhale the delicate, elusive perfume of her hair.

Craig was helpless against these attacks. Having once crossed the boundaries of convention and subjected her to the force of his passion, he shrank from a repetition of the incident with a fear born of the knowledge of the desperate lengths to which this girl's tempestuous nature would drive her, and Alice, knowing, and knowing that he knew, used her advantage with the relentless cruelty which only a woman can show. The ingenuity and skill with which she devised ways and means to torture him would have driven a savage, or a religious fanatic, to envious despair. It was a dangerous game she was playing, and, with a nature less forceful and less self-contained than that of her victim, the tragedy would have come sooner than it did.

One night just at sunset she ascended to

the deck, and found Craig standing by the rail watching the glowing orb of day as it slowly sank into the tumbling waste of water to the westward. With an assumption of unconscious interest in the scene, which was one of her favourite weapons, she came and stood beside him, watching the vivid ever-changing glory in the sky, and apparently unconscious of his presence. She was garbed in a simple gown of white lace cut square at the throat, and Craig, in his despair, thought he had never seen her more beautiful or more alluring. The fresh southwest breeze had loosened some of the tendrils of her hair from their confinement, whipping the strands across the bronzed face of the man, like tiny lashes goading him to madness.

Alice, out of the corner of her eye, watched the compression of his whitening lips and the small red spot which was burning in his well-bronzed cheek. A sort of telepathic understanding was gradually growing up between them. Each knew the thought that was in the other's mind, and each knew that

the other knew. At length one of the strands of her hair got caught in his nostril, causing him to sneeze. Alice laughed, a short, maddening little laugh with a catch in it.

Then the storm broke. With burning eyes Craig turned swiftly towards her.

"By all the gods you *are* mine and I *will* have you!" he cried hoarsely.

Like a rifle bullet came back the clear and cutting reply.

"By the one *eternal* God you will not!"

Craig, his hands clenched at his side, took one step towards her. Suddenly he felt the muzzle of the little automatic pistol pressed against his breast. Back of it was Alice's white, uncompromising face, with a gleam in the eyes which he had seen there once before.

At the touch of the steel his madness fell away from him, leaving him cold and deadly calm.

"Well, why don't you shoot?" he asked evenly. "You are perfectly justified."

"Why should I shoot?" she replied scornfully. "If I kill you, you would cease to

suffer. There is no suffering in death but for those who remain, and I *want* you to suffer."

"You want me to suffer, do you?" he replied, with sombre eyes glowing into hers. "Well, you shall have your wish."

Suddenly Alice felt the hand that held the pistol seized in a vise-like grip, long, slender fingers of steel were closing around her own, compressing her grasp upon the trigger. With a muffled scream she wrenched at her hand, striving to divert the muzzle of the weapon, but too late. There was a flash, a confused ringing in her ears, and Craig sank to the deck without a sound.

For a moment she stood petrified, horror-struck. A thin wreath of smoke curled up from the muzzle of the pistol in her hand and quickly dissolved in the atmosphere. The awning over the taffrail flapped twice. For a moment the lace above her bosom ceased to rise and fall, seeming in its motionlessness as though it covered the bust of a waxen image. Then with a low moan she dropped to her knees beside the motionless form and

began to search hurriedly, blindly, for the wound.

Craig's soft flannel shirt was scorched and blackened over his breast by the round ring of the powder charge, so close had the weapon been held. It seemed as though her terror-numbered fingers would never be able to unfasten the buttons. At last she got it open, and tearing away the thin gauze rowing shirt, which she found beneath, she passed her trembling hands over the smooth, white flesh in search of the fatal spot. Then her fears gave place to wonder. On the firm, well-rounded contour of the thorax there was no mark, no crimson blood, no gaping wound; nothing but a round, red spot above the heart, an abrasion, as though the skin had been bruised by a sharp blow.

Thrusting her hand into the pocket of his shirt in search of an explanation of the miracle Alice drew forth Craig's watch, shattered beyond repair. The hardened steel of the back plate had deflected the bullet, causing it to pass out under his arm without even breaking the skin. As Alice made this as-

tonishing discovery, Craig's lips fluttered, and with a great, gasping intake of breath he opened his eyes and looked up at her as she bent over him.

"Well, am I safely ticketed for the Great Beyond?" he asked faintly.

"Ticketed for nowhere."

Alice, in the reaction from her terror, was growing angry. "You are not hurt. You are not even wounded. Your watch case deflected the bullet. I am afraid it is ruined, though."

"Oh, it is merely a question of time then, and not of eternity." He smiled.

"I don't see how you, who have been so close to death, can jest about it."

"Why not? Death is always at our elbow in this world, and an inch of a miss is as good as a mile. It was certainly a solar plexus you handed me, though. I wonder if I can stand up?"

"Oh, please, please," cried Alice, wringing her hands as Craig rose unsteadily to his feet. "If we must remain here until you are cured of your mad infatuation, can't

we at least live in harmony: can't we avoid these terrible scenes? "

" With all my heart," cried Craig joyfully. " Harmony is the one desire of my life. These scenes, as you call them, have not been of my seeking."

" I know it. I know it," cried the girl eagerly, " I acknowledge my fault. Here, I will give you a pledge." She stooped as she spoke, and seizing the pistol, threw it far over the side into the sea. " There, I am quite at your mercy now. I shall have to rely on your honour as a gentleman to protect me."

" I have nothing to throw overboard but myself," responded Craig gravely, " and that would leave you with rather more than your share of the work to do on board. Are we going to be chums in the future? Will you shake hands on it? "

" Yes."

" And are we not some day going to be something even nearer and dearer? " he asked seriously.

" No. Certainly not," cried Alice, bri-

ding at once, and withdrawing her hand.

"That was not a part of the contract."

"Perhaps you are right, but I do not think so. In the end the strongest thing will win."

CHAPTER XIII

A STRANGE HUNTING

WHEN Alice awoke from her siesta the following day, the intuitive perception of conditions on board the *Sabine*, which she was rapidly acquiring, told her that the yacht was no longer in motion. Pushing back the sliding door of the library and stepping out into the saloon, she found herself in the semi-darkness of an unilluminated apartment. What light there was entered the cabin through a series of large panels which extended entirely around the exterior wall of the apartment between the pilasters, and occupied the entire space between the low wainscoting and the cornice work which supported the ceiling.

Alice had never examined the walls of the saloon particularly, further than to note that they had been treated in dark green of neutral tint to harmonize with the colour scheme

obtaining in the rest of the apartment. She now perceived that this unobtrusive decorative effect had served to conceal heavy transparent plates which had been wrought into the vessel's side and through which one standing within could obtain a view in every direction.

The *Sabine* was resting motionless upon the smooth, sandy floor of the ocean bottom in the midst of a leafless forest of gnarled and stunted coral formations, interspersed with dense thickets of kelp and seaweed, whose delicate waving tips swayed and tossed in the currents that agitated them, like aspens quivering responsively to the amorous touches of an April zephyr. The yacht seemed to be the core and centre of a soft, diffused light which penetrated in every direction to the distance of perhaps a hundred yards, illuminating the sombre isles of the coral forest until its pervasive radiance was lost and dissipated in the eternal gloom of the ocean's tenebrious depths.

What the nature of this light was, Alice could not discover, but it had evidently

served to attract all the fishes in the vicinity, for the yacht was surrounded by myriads of the finny denizens of the deep, who wheeled and circled and darted through the branches of this submarine sylvania, like flocks of brilliant-hued birds.

As Alice stood spell-bound watching this beautiful and ever-changing spectacle, she saw a figure emerge from a thicket of tangled marine plants and approach the yacht along the sandy ocean bottom. It was Craig, clad in a diving suit, and bearing on the top of his huge, ungainly submarine helmet a small electric light, which glowed and glistened through the transparent green of the water like a luminous star.

Alice, suspecting that he was engaged in some secret occupation, drew back in the shadows to watch him. A few steps brought the engineer to the bows of the yacht, where he temporarily disappeared from view. He soon reappeared, however, staggering under the burden of one of the heavy mushroom anchors, which Alice had seen stacked up in the storeroom of the yacht. This he pro-

ceeded to bury in the soft ooze a short distance away. When this was accomplished he disappeared again, and soon returned dragging after him a length of heavy cable whose other end was apparently connected to something which was still concealed from view in the diving chamber of the submarine.

Alice's curiosity was now thoroughly aroused. She was burning to know what all these preparations could mean. She was soon enlightened, for shackling the cable to the stock of the anchor, Craig returned to the diving chamber.

Alice saw the cable suddenly tighten and jerk upward, and raising her eyes she beheld, tugging and straining at the end of its short tether, dipping and swaying in the current like a captive balloon floating in the atmosphere, the device on which the engineer had long been working, and which he had once told her was a tide motor. The shackled servant of his brain being safely enchained, Craig reappeared bearing a couple of buckets of what appeared to be some form of cement. This he piled up around the anchor

stock until after a number of trips a pyramid had been raised, which the action of the water was rapidly turning into a solid block of stone. On returning from his last trip he perceived Alice watching him, her face pressed against the transparent panel in absorbed, unconscious interest. He waved his hand to her in greeting, disappeared within the diving chamber, and a few minutes later she heard his approaching footsteps in the passageway.

"Congratulate me! Miss Huntington," he cried with beaming face, as he entered the saloon, "the first unit of the power that will one day move the world is placed and in action. I am sure you wish the experiment success."

"If it is to be for the good of humanity, I most certainly do, but you can hardly expect the captive to share in her jailer's enthusiasm."

"Now, that is what I call unkind. In the moment of my exaltation you remind me that, while nominally your captor, I am in reality your slave, bound by withes of steel to your

chariot wheels. But what think you, Serene Highness, is it not worth the inconvenience of being abducted to behold a sight like this? Can the birds of the air discover a more vivid and varied picture of form, colour and motion? "

Craig waved his hand toward the panel as he spoke. It was, indeed, a wonderful sight. The submarine was surrounded by myriads upon myriads of fish, attracted and fascinated by the light which emanated from her. Fish of all sizes, shapes and colours, squirrel fish, angel fish, tangs, pork fish, with their brilliant yellow stripes, soap fish, negro fish, hound fish, with their slender attenuated bodies and light blue and silver colourings; mullets, horse-heads, carboneros, mouse fish with their grotesque forms and fussy little personalities; blue and yellow seweyas, those cutthroats of the finny tribe, ready on the instant to rip open the side of an enemy with the sharp curved spine, which they carry within their bodies near the caudal fin like a stiletto in its sheath; amber fish, old wives, Spanish ladies, pompanos, and a thousand

others wheeled and circled and flocked around the submarine in a kaleidoscopic mass of colour and motion until the long, dark form of some predatory member of the selachoides darted out of the gloom, sending them scurrying to cover like song birds at the appearance of the red-tailed hawk. Every pigment and colour known to art was represented in their gleaming bodies — gold, purple, violet, scarlet, amber, pink, green, yellow, mauve and blue grouped and arranged in the most bizarre patterns. Forms as slender and graceful as a mermaid, forms so grotesque, so distorted, so terrible that they seemed like the fragments of some long forgotten nightmare; forms that the most vivid human imagination never could have conceived, drifted and darted across the field of vision.

“ Oh, see! ” cried Alice suddenly, “ here is one which looks for all the world like a sultana roll.”

The fish which had drawn forth this exclamation was indeed arrayed in a brilliant and variegated motley. It had stopped before one of the transparent panels and

seemed to be regarding them curiously out of its great, amber-coloured eyes. Its body was marked with six perpendicular black stripes intersecting brilliant horizontal bands of purple, green, red, yellow, blue and gray, while the head was variegated with green and wine-coloured markings radiating from its eyes after the pattern of the rising sun ensign of Japan.

“That is strange,” remarked Craig, curiously. “It looks like a flower parrot, the Mal Guawah of the Singhalese. I have never known of its being found except on the southern coast of Ceylon. I guess we will have to have that fellow for our aquarium.”

“Aquarium!” echoed Alice, “I don’t see what you want of an aquarium when you can immerse yourself at will in the midst of the greatest aquarium in nature.”

“That is true if I desired to observe only for the sake of amusement, but there are many inhabitants of the deep whose habits and mode of life are little known which one ought to desire to study and observe more closely. For such as these we have provided

temporary accommodations on board, where they can range at will among their natural surroundings and yet still be always under a watchful and friendly eye. You shall see."

As he spoke, he stepped to the cabinet where the electric switches were concealed and closed a circuit. Instantly the soft, purring sound of an electric dynamo was heard, and in the midst of the dark green onyx panels, which formed the dividing partition between the saloon and the apartments beyond, milky spots appeared. These spread rapidly, driving the dark green markings of the onyx before them as clouds dissolve upon the surface of a photographic plate, leaving the panels as clear and crystalline as flawless plate glass.

Alice at once perceived that a space had been left in the thickness of the partition some two feet deep, which was backed by a sheet of softly luminous material similar to that which was used in the lighting panels of the ceiling. The space was entirely filled with clear and sparkling sea water, and the floor had been strewn with fine white sand

and was decorated with kelp and seaweed and graceful coral formations.

"These are the temporary quarters of our finny guests," smiled Craig. "Do you approve of them?"

"They are certainly very ingenious," replied Alice, "but how do you induce them to enter?"

"Oh, that is the easiest part of it. We simply extend them an earnest and pressing invitation to step into our parlour, as the hospitable spider once did to the bashful and retiring fly. I have been waiting until we reached the warmer waters of the tropics before stocking up our crystal palace, as the fish of the equatorial region are much more varied and interesting than those of the temperate seas. But I guess we shall have to make a beginning on your sultana roll friend."

As Craig spoke, he closed another switch, and Alice saw that the tank was connected with the exterior ocean by a large tube of what appeared to be glass, which ended in a funnel-shaped opening in the side of the

ship. In a recess of this tube a curious form of valveless diaphragm pump was sucking the water into the conduit and discharging it through a syphon-like tube into the tank.

The Mal Guawah was still swimming around near the window when the *Sabine* began to move slowly backward, bringing it opposite the inlet. The unsuspecting quarry was soon drawn gently towards the opening by an imperceptible current, until suddenly, realizing that something was wrong, it started to dart away, but too late. With a rapid increase of speed the pump injected a powerful jet into the tank, drawing the fish into the opening in spite of its struggles, and throwing it up through the syphon tube into the aquarium, where it was soon swimming calmly about as if it had entirely forgotten its strange experience, and displaying its vivid and glowing colours against the luminous background like a small, animated section of a solar-spectrum.

The first specimen having been safely secured, Craig moved the yacht slowly about, searching for others. A fine specimen of a

blue tang was soon captured, together with a red hind, a gold bridal parrot fish, a flying gurnard, or bat fish, and several of the funny little black, white and yellow mouse fish before mentioned.

Craig, in making his captures, was careful to select only those specimens which were reasonably sure to live together in harmony, as the introduction of one of the smaller selachoides into his happy family would have quickly depleted his collection. As there was no lack of game to furnish quarries for this strange hunting, the aquarium was soon filled with specimens of every form, variety and colour.

As the *Sabine* moved slowly forward through the waving tendrils and coral branches of the submarine forest, Alice suddenly clutched Craig's arm. "Look!" she cried excitedly. On the outer edge of the luminous circle of which the *Sabine* was the core and centre, a dark mass rose up from among the twining branches of the coral forest like a great, gray ledge. As the *Sabine* moved closer, it was seen to be the hull of a

vessel, weed-grown and covered with shells and coral, but still recognizable. The wreck was evidently of great antiquity, for the high, carved poop and castellated forecastle revealed a type of marine architecture prevalent in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The masts had broken close off, and stood, short, coral-encrusted stumps, above the deck, like ghostly accusing fingers pointing up to Heaven.

Craig manœuvred the yacht so as to pass entirely around the hull, marvelling at the wonderful preservation of the timbers and the quaintness of its lines.

As they passed slowly under the stern he stopped the yacht suddenly. Barnacle encrusted and draped in a heavy growth of seaweed, but still legible, they read, in great raised, curiously carved letters, the name "Santa Maria, Parlos."

"Can it be possible?" whispered Alice, awe and wonder struggling in her voice.

"The flagship of Columbus?" questioned Craig. "Possible, but not probable; there were many Santa Marias in those days. The

name was a favourite among the old Spanish mariners, and doubtless many a Santa Maria has sailed out of Parlos never to return. History is rather vague and uncertain as to the fate of the original ship of Columbus. Some accounts have it that she was lost on the Mosquito Coast in an attempt to discover the western passage; others that she was broken up at Cadiz as unseaworthy; others that she went down in a sirocco in the Levant. This is worth investigating, however."

Craig hurried from the saloon as he spoke, and Alice soon saw him clad in his diving suit on the ocean bottom. Approaching the stern of the wreck, he selected a position directly beneath the latticed cabin windows, and admitting a small quantity of water through a valve into the acetyline chamber of his diving suit, floated gently up to the curiously carved gallery which extended around the stern. Gaining a foothold on this, he quickly disappeared within one of the dark, cavernous openings and Alice was left a prey to hopes and fears and expectations.

Craig was lost to sight for almost half an

hour, and Alice was beginning to be seriously alarmed, when she was relieved to behold the light on the top of his helmet emerging from a hatchway on the poop. As he came entirely into view, she saw that he was carrying in his arms something, the nature of which she could not make out. Leaping lightly from the poop to the ocean bottom, Craig quickly regained the diving chamber, and Alice soon heard him in the passageway.

“ Well, I don’t know whether I have discovered the treasure of the Incas, or the crown jewels of Castile,” he laughed, as he deposited his find on the table. “ I know it is heavy enough, though, when you get it out of the water.”

The object was evidently a cadenas of silver or some other metal, tarnished and corroded a deep black, and thickly encrusted with minute seashells and coral.

Craig went forward to the storeroom, and soon returned with a hammer and chisel, and, after knocking off most of the foreign growth which covered the casket like the frosting on a wedding cake, he succeeded, with a few

well-directed strokes, in prying off the lid. The box was entirely filled with a loose and heterogeneous mass of old and water-worn coins. Spanish doubloons, pieces of eight, English sovereigns, coins from all the maritime countries which border on the Mediterranean, and little bars and ingots of metal, whose weight and discolouration indicated them to be gold and silver. At the bottom of the box was discovered a beautifully wrought crucifix attached to a heavy silver chain and the silver hilt of a poniard exquisitely picked out in delicate arabesques, a superb example of the armourer's art. The blade of the dagger had been entirely eaten away, a brown, rusty streak only showing where the tang had entered the hilt. A beautifully carved tourmaline had been set in the pommel, and in examining the stone Craig accidentally touched a secret spring, when the piece came off in his hand, showing it to be a heavy signet ring which had been cunningly contrived to fit into a recess in the pommel, for the convenience, doubtless, of the owner when he did not wish to wear it

on his finger. The stone was skilfully quartered with the arms of Castile and Leon, and on rubbing the heavy filigree setting, the salient points of the gold soon began to gleam with their pristine lustre.

“ This is indeed a find,” cried Craig gleefully; “ this can be nothing less than the signet of the renowned Isabella herself. We will say it is, at any rate, and who is there to dispute us? Would you like to see how the insignia of royalty becomes your patrician finger? ” went on Craig, banteringly.

Alice was intently examining the marvellous carving of the crucifix, and stretched out her hand for the ring without looking up. The next thing she realized Craig had taken it in his own and slipped the heavy signet over her third finger, at the same time saying in a deep and solemn voice: “ With this ring I thee wed.”

For a moment the unexpectedness of the thing held her motionless; a powerful current seemed to be flowing through the contact which their fingers made, permeating and thrilling her entire body, and then: — snatch-

ing her hand from his reluctant grasp, she sprang erect, facing him, her eyes flashing lightning glances and every fibre of her form quivering with anger. For a moment thus, and then, tearing the heavy signet from her finger, she flung it to the farthest corner of the cabin and swept from the room.

Craig stood motionless for a moment looking after her with his inscrutable smile, and then, starting the pumps which brought the *Sabine* to the surface, he ascended to the deck.

On returning to the saloon an hour later, a careful search of that part of the cabin where Alice had thrown it failed to reveal the ring. Craig went over the ground carefully several times. The silver cadenas, with its heap of coins, the crucifix, the carved hilt of the poniard, all were there, but the signet of the royal Isabella had unaccountably disappeared.

CHAPTER XIV

THE POWERS OF OMNIUM

DAY after day the *Sabine* held her course leisurely southward. The biting February gales of the Hook gave place to the warm and languorous breath of the tropics. By day the ocean surrounded them a sheet of glittering sapphire, while at night the stars glowed on the soft black velvet of the sky like luminous lamps of love beckoning them to some enchanted region below the horizon. Often they passed small, heavily wooded cays or islands clothed in a luxuriance of tropical verdure, and at times the air would be heavy with the scent of orange blossoms and the flowering eucalyptus.

One day the luminous pointer of the telautographic chart told Alice that they had forced the Mona Passage and had entered that realm of romance, that treasure house of story and legend, the Caribbean Sea. At

last they were floating on the waters where had ploughed the treasure-laden galleons of old, where Drake and Morgan had led their picturesque cutthroats and buccanneers, where the great Columbus had steered his caravels in search of the western passage, and where Cortez, Pizarro and Balboa had led their conquistadors to the subjugation of a new world.

As the days passed away in this enchanted region of warmth and sunshine, Alice gradually ceased to think of the strangeness of her situation. The old life back in New York, with its round of teas, theatres and receptions, its many insistent, inconsequential trivialities, seemed infinitely remote. The pure patrician pallor of her face had given place to the ruddy glow of perfect and exuberant health. The charm, the alluring mysticism, the sensuous appeal of the tropics was entering into her and claiming her for its own.

Something was growing and expanding within her nature, something which she little suspected and still less understood. In Craig

she found an interesting companion as well as a stubborn jailer. It could not be said that he suited his moods to hers, rather that he moulded and bent her moods to his. To a certain extent he dominated her, and the occasional realization of the fact never failed to throw her into a violent outburst of temper, as if to repudiate what her very vehemence revealed. These outbursts gained in violence as they became less frequent, as if they hoped to make up in intensity what they lacked in pertinacity. After one of these outbursts Alice would confine herself to her cabin for days at a time.

Craig bowed his head to the storms, and busied himself with his drafting board until curiosity, impatience or anger drove her out of retirement again. There was a whimsical, boyish ingenuousness about him at times that drew her strangely without her knowing it, a mood which masked but did not conceal the man of iron will and inflexible purpose.

These days of aimless wandering on an ocean of dreams were not days of idleness for Craig. For hours at a time he would sit

bending over his drafting table or figuring out stresses and strains in the new material he was developing. For hours at a time they would sit together in the chart house, or, in the evening, under the awning over the stern, talking of his plans, hopes, and aspirations, and Alice was acquiring an insight into a phase of life, a strata of activity, of the existence of which she had before been hardly conscious.

It was on one of these balmy, tropical evenings, as they sat under the taffrail awning, that Craig told her his story and of the wonderful substance whose discovery he expected to revolutionize social and economic conditions; a story which held her breathless and spellbound until its close. She had asked him about the marvellous windows of the chart house, and of what they could be made to resist the enormous pressure of the water in submerging.

“That material,” replied Craig, in answer to her question, “is omnium, the most wonderful substance in the world to-day, the story of the discovery and development of

which is practically the story of my recent life."

"It must be very interesting. Won't you tell it to me?"

"Willingly. If you can imagine a substance having the specific gravity of aluminum, forty times the tensile strength of vanadium steel, the elasticity of pure rubber, the transparency of glass, ten times the conductivity of pure copper under certain conditions, and an absolute electrical insulator under certain others, you can form a partial conception of this remarkable substance.

"The story of how I came to be mixed up in it is briefly told. I had just landed in New York from a three years' sojourn on the Isthmus, where I had been engaged on some of the engineering work in the Canal Zone, and was strolling aimlessly up Broadway when I ran into an old friend, a chum of my student days. We were delighted to see each other, and promptly adjourned to the Engineering Club to swap experiences. He had just returned from an exploring expedition to Labrador in the interest of the

Government at Quebec, and was full of enthusiasm regarding a wonderful water power located in the unexplored interior of that little known country, rumours concerning which he had picked up among the Indians of the fishing villages along the coast. The wanderlust, the thirst for exploration, was burning strong within him, and his thrilling tales of this marvellous country fell on sympathetic ears.

“There must have been something contagious in his enthusiasm, for, before we parted that evening, his suggestion that we get up an expedition to discover this mysterious waterfall, or at least satisfy ourselves that it did not exist, had been agreed to, and we had planned to meet the following week and work out the details.

“To make a long story short, three months later found us at a little fishing village on the east coast, waiting for the snow to give us a firm footing for our dog teams.

“Ill luck seemed to pursue our expedition from the start. We had hardly penetrated a hundred miles into the interior before small-

pox broke out among the party, and in spite of all we could do, four of our men were carried off by it. Charlie was the last one to come down with it. We did everything we could for him, but on the twentieth day from the time we left the coast he died, and we buried his body beside the trail. Almost his last words were, 'Push on, Jack, I know you will find it.'

"Well, I determined to push on with what was left of the party, but though the small-pox seemed to have left us, our trials were by no means over. A malignant disease soon broke out among the dogs, wiping out some of the teams and so weakening the others that we were obliged to cache some of our provisions and leave them behind.

"In spite of these difficulties we had succeeded in penetrating into the region where I knew the waterfall must be located, if it existed at all, when one day, on returning to camp from a short detour, I found that my party had decamped. They had become alarmed by the shrinkage of the provisions and our distance from the coast, and had

taken advantage of my absence to hit the back trail. My position was, as you may suppose, pretty desperate, and would have been more so but for my plan of dividing supplies among the sledges so that the outfit of each sledge would be complete in itself. Thanks to this practice it turned out that I was better supplied with the one team I had with me than were the rest of the party with their larger numbers to feed.

“ As I am of a somewhat tenacious disposition, I determined to take one more day in exploring the range before turning back, the more so as I judged from the conformation of the region that I must be in the immediate vicinity of the falls, if falls there were. My search did not reveal anything, however, and I had turned my dogs' heads to the coast, convinced that the cataract of the ‘ White Spirit ’ was a myth, when on crossing a range my ear was saluted by a distant booming which I at once recognized as the sound of falling water.

“ All that morning I followed the sound, until late in the afternoon I came out on the

banks of a swiftly flowing river at the foot of a wall of cliffs, and saw a sight which I shall never forget. The cliffs rose sheer from the valley to a height of six hundred feet, and from the top the bellowing cataract made its leap into space. The volume of water was not as great as that which flows out of Lake Erie, but the height of the falls made the Horseshoe seem like a mill dam in comparison. Here was a water power without rival in the world.

“ I spent the following day in climbing to the tableland above the falls and examining the conformation of the watershed and the character of the country. The valley was sheltered from the north by a high range of mountains and showed indications of great mineral wealth. Of my journey back to the coast I will spare you the details. Sufficient to say that I arrived at the settlement with nothing but my rifle and the shinbone of my last dog hanging over my shoulder.

“ In another month I was back in New York again and wondering for what purpose I had expended so much energy and labour,

when the question was unexpectedly answered for me in a most remarkable manner.

“ It seems there had been an accident on the transmission line of the Niagara Falls Power Company; an enormous short circuit had occurred which had jumped through everything, partially destroying the plant and putting the lighting system of several cities and towns out of commission. Its source was traced to the laboratory of a German scientist, one Herr Rothe by name, who had been killed by the flash and whose little plant had been burned down. In searching among the ruins of the latter a small rod about twelve inches long and a half an inch in diameter of what appeared to be glass was discovered, but on examination it was found to possess qualities unknown in any glass up to that time. It happened to fall into the hands of a man who brought it to me to test. I soon found that I had a remarkable substance under examination. Though apparently nothing but a rod of perfectly clear glass, it had the strength and toughness of the finest tool steel. No tool, not even a diamond could

make any impression on it. If sufficient power were applied it could be bent into a circle, but when the pressure was removed it would spring back to its original shape, uninjured. One day, in seeking to determine its elasticity, I tested it to the point of destruction, and after stretching it out to about twenty times its natural length it broke in the middle, and I had two pieces where before I had had but one; and now comes the wonderful part of the story.

“ One day I was testing one of the pieces in an electrical circuit to determine its insulating qualities, when my assistant happened to pick up the other piece, which was lying on a table nearby. With a yell he dropped it like a red-hot coal.

“ ‘ What is the matter? ’ I asked.

“ ‘ Matter,’ he replied angrily, ‘ matter enough. I got a shock off of that darn thing. It’s hotter than Hades.’

“ ‘ Nonsense,’ I laughed, and picked up the piece from the floor. As I grasped it in my hand I felt nothing, but happening to put my thumb over the end of the rod, I received a

shock which knocked me half way across the room.

“ It was now my assistant’s turn to laugh, but I did not mind, I felt that I was on the trail of something big. I at once started to investigate, and found that the piece of rod which I held was evidently receiving its current from the piece which I had connected with the dynamo circuit. I carried it into the next room and the result was the same. I carried it home with me to the other end of the town, and there was apparently no diminution in the strength of the current. My head was beginning to swim with the magnitude of the discovery. By arrangement with the superintendent of the lighting plant, I substituted my two pieces of rod in place of the return leg of one of his lighting circuits, and succeeded in transmitting the full amperage over a distance of over four miles without wires. Then I knew that I held in my hand the solution of the wireless transmission of power, but the problem was how to duplicate the wonderful substance.

“ Herr Rothe had died evidently at the

moment of success and had taken his secret with him. I made a careful investigation among his effects to determine the materials with which he had been experimenting, and, so far as possible, his methods, and after months of discouraging work and innumerable failures, and after again almost wrecking the plant of the power company, I succeeded in producing a small rod about three inches long of what I have called omnium.

“The rest is merely a story of development. I had at my command the knowledge of a vast water power, and the means to transmit that power and make it valuable. The obtaining of the grants from the Government at Ottawa, and the building of the laboratories and the power plant at the foot of the falls have consumed the three years since I first met you at the Embassy Ball, but now the roar of my battery of transmitters at the top of the cliff is drowning the thunder of the cataract, ready to furnish power to all who may apply.”

“And you mean to tell me that the power

which drives this boat is derived from a waterfall in the wilds of Labrador? ”

“ Precisely. This cruise was undertaken in part to test the limits of transmission and the losses entailed. We are now some three thousand miles from our base and there has been as yet no apparent drop in our power.”

“ I can hardly believe it. Have you any theory which satisfactorily explains the phenomena? ”

“ Only vaguely. The development of the substance is too recent to have all of its eccentricities reduced to scientific formulæ. We only know that under certain conditions it does certain things. The how and the why are still matters of conjecture. My own theory (hardly a scientific one, I fear, but filling the bill as far as a working hypothesis goes) is roughly this:— Science, in order to satisfactorily explain the transmission of light and heat, had to create ether — a hypothetical element of extreme tenuity and elasticity, pervading all matter and filling the vastness of interstellar space, having the property of transmitting light and heat, and

of producing the phenomena of electricity and magnetism. Now bearing in mind the extreme elasticity of omnium, why is it not reasonable to suppose that when a rod of the substance is stretched to the point of fracture, its broken ends are still connected by an intangible, impalpable essence beyond the detection of our dull and imperfect senses, and that this emanation, essence, or whatever you choose to call it, has the power to transmit electrical currents practically without loss."

"Then all you have to do to obtain power at a distance is to take a mass of omnium, pull it apart, connect one piece to a dynamo and carry the other piece where you will?"

"That is the idea precisely."

"How wonderful!" murmured Alice.

"Would you like to see the mechanism of our receiving end?"

"Very much."

Rising, Craig led the way to the saloon, and sliding back a panel under the staircase, revealed a long passageway which led for-

ward, between his apartments and those which she herself occupied.

Alice had never ventured into this part of the boat before. As they made their way forward, they passed through the small galley or kitchen of the yacht, equipped upon one side with refrigerating compartments, cupboards and closets for stores, and on the opposite side above the mixing table the walls were filled with a number of electric ovens and broilers, each with its automatic time switch and control.

"You see our chef has no excuse for failures," Craig remarked. "The temperature of our ovens is automatically regulated and shut off by a time clock, so that we always get accurate results."

Alice would fain have lingered to inspect this modern kitchen, but Craig led her forward into the very eyes of the ship, where the power plant was located. Here, mounted on a heavy rail, like a buss-bar, was a large hemisphere of what appeared to be dull bronze metal, on the flat upper surface of which innumerable tiny, electric sparks were

dancing and crackling, giving off the fresh pungent odour of liberated oxygen.

"That does not look very formidable, does it?" remarked Craig. "But from the other half of that ball, which is mounted on the cliff overlooking our power house, a stream of electric fire several yards long is shooting out into space with the roar of a hundred Gatling guns."

"It must be a wonderful sight to see your entire battery in operation."

"It is. Some day you shall see it."

"You speak very confidently."

"Why not?"

"You must not think that the interest I take in your work, Mr. Craig, extends to yourself."

"No, not now perhaps, but it will in time.

'All things come to those who wait.'"

"Yes. If they wait in the right spirit. I am afraid that you have not discovered the right spirit."

"Well, I am willing to seek for that also."

"I am sorry, but it is too late. You elected to take things into your own hands to try

and shape the course of events, and the inevitable consequences will inevitably follow."

"I interfered to preserve the status quo. If I had not, what would have been the result? By this time you would have been the Duchess of Buckminster, and probably the most wretchedly unhappy woman in the world, while I — well, all the waiting in the world would not have helped my case."

"You are referring to a subject which I have repeatedly told you I could not discuss with you. You recall to me the fact that I am still a prisoner here. With your gracious permission I shall retire to my cell."

CHAPTER XV

A STARTLING ENCOUNTER

ONE afternoon, as the *Sabine* was slowly drifting by a densely wooded gem of an island, Alice, who happened to be in the chart house, expressed a wish to land and explore it. It was the first time since she had come on board that she had voluntarily expressed a desire for anything. Craig, now as quick to please as he had at first been firm and uncompromising, immediately slowed down the yacht and ran her nose gently up on the beach.

“Suppose we prepare a lunch and make a picnic of it,” he suggested with boyish enthusiasm, that seemed to communicate itself to Alice.

Hardly waiting for her assent, he plunged below, and soon returned with rugs and cushions, and a hamper plentifully stored with good things. Depositing these at the gang-

way, he next brought to light from a concealed pocket in the deck a fairy craft as light and delicate as Cinderella's crystal slipper. It was a canoe made of a perfectly clear sheet of the wondrous substance omnium, and when launched it floated lightly on the water, like a chalice of flashing, glittering crystal.

Alice hardly dared to step into the frail craft. It seemed as if she must certainly put her foot straight through the bottom. Craig laughingly reassured her by his example, and they were soon embarked and skirting along the shore, looking for a suitable place to land.

Gazing down through the bottom of their tiny craft, Alice could see the fish, frightened by their approach, darting away to places of concealment among the stones. Once her heart came into her mouth as a big rock bumped against the side of the canoe, but the seemingly frail craft sustained the impact without damage.

Soon a shelving beach with an open grove back of it tempted them to land, and drawing the canoe up the shingle, Craig spread out the rugs under the shade of the overhanging

foliage and set out the contents of the hamper in the most attractive manner possible.

“ Now, this is what I call living,” he announced, as he leaned back against the trunk of a huge eucalyptus tree, a *purée de foie gras* sandwich in one hand and a huge olive impaled on a spear in the other.

“ Confess now, Miss Alice, would you not rather be a prisoner on this gem of a tropical island with even such a fierce, untamed ogre as myself for a jailer, than to be locked up in a musty, old tumbled-down castle, where a shower bath is an anachronism and electric lights are unknown, and with his Grace the Duke keeping watch and ward at the outer portal? ”

“ Since I apparently have no choice in the matter, I fail to see of what use a confession would be.”

Alice's spirits were expanding with her advent on terra-firma, and she could not seem to muster the necessary resolution to be angry just then.

“ Confession is said to be good for the

soul," remarked Craig comfortably, "just as *purée de foie gras* is good for the body."

"When taken internally. Thank you, I think I prefer to retain my confessions within, where they will do me the most good."

"Silence is often a confession," remarked Craig.

"Yes, if one chooses to take it that way. I cannot help the interpretation you place upon my actions."

"I don't interpret them. I should soon be a fit subject for a sanatorium if I tried. Actions lead to results; I am content to await the results."

"Oh, you are?"

"Yes, why not? We are here; what could anyone desire more than this? A beautiful tropical island for a domain. The sound of the sea to soothe one's slumbers, a peaceful circumscribing ocean to gaze out upon and to keep visitors off the front lawn, and 'Thou beside me singing in the wilderness.'"

"Your poetic fancy is leading you astray, Mr. Craig. I am not singing."

"Well, you look as if you might on slight provocation. I never have seen you appear so thoroughly contented since your advent on board the *Sabine*."

"Appearances are often deceptive. For instance, you look as if you were in a deeply contemplative frame of mind, when I know that in reality you are merely anxious to take a nap."

"Sleep on a day like this? No, perish the thought. I am going to leave you to the contemplation of your shortcomings and take a trip of exploration along the beach."

"Well, bon voyage! If you don't find me here when you come back, you will know that I have started on the return trip to New York."

Alice watched Craig's tall, athletic figure as it swung down the beach, and wondered at the change that had come over her feelings in three short weeks. This man had forcibly removed her from her accustomed station in life, and was still holding her cap-

tive against her will, yet she was treating him not only with tolerance but even with intimacy. She told herself that she was merely making the best of the situation, but that hardly seemed to satisfy the requirements of her searching self-investigation.

The earliest form of wooing was with a club, and abduction, in olden times, was the only recognized method of obtaining a wife. Alice idly wondered whether the modern daughters of humanity had entirely emancipated themselves from those old, primeval customs. To get away from the thought she determined to make an exploration for herself, and as Craig had taken the beach, she decided to strike into the woods and try to cross the island, which she knew could not be of any great extent.

The undergrowth was thicker than she had supposed, however, and after penetrating some distance she was about to give up the attempt when she suddenly broke through the dense leafy screen and came out on the shore of a little cove closely sequestered between

two heavily wooded promontories, and almost entirely landlocked.

Lying quietly in the centre of this natural basin, Alice was rather startled to behold a small, black schooner. She had fine and graceful lines, and was evidently capable of considerable speed, but there was a general air of carelessness and neglect about her which was at once apparent to Alice's nautical eye, and which gave her a forbidding and sinister appearance. Her sides, which had once been painted black, were streaked palewise with long bands of rust from her channel plates. One of her topmasts was missing, and her running rigging was hanging loose and unkempt from her slender, tapering masts. There was not a sign of life about her, but a small whaleboat, as rusty and ill-conditioned as the craft it tended, was drawn up on the beach, showing that some, at least, of the crew were on the island.

Alice felt an instinctive suspicion of the character of a craft that would be found tucked away in such an out of the way place. She might be a sponge fisherman or a trader

among the islands, but the trading schooners were hardly more than pirates of a smaller growth, and seldom refrained from turning their hands to anything that promised to yield a dollar, honest or otherwise.

Alice determined to quietly retrace her steps, and inform Craig of the presence of the stranger, and was just turning to carry out her intention, when a shadow fell at her feet, and looking up she found herself face to face with a man.



CHAPTER XVI

THE BATTLE ON THE BEACH

THE stranger was carefully dressed in a suit of blue yachting cloth; a broad felt sombrero was perched picturesquely on his jet black hair, and through a brilliant red sash about his waist was thrust a long stiletto in a sheath of lizard's skin. The face was singularly handsome, and at the same time singularly sinister, dark, oval and clear cut, with deep-set, brilliant eyes and a small, jet-black moustache, which pointed straight out and revealed rather than concealed two rows of gleaming white teeth. The soft, white shirt which he wore was scrupulously clean and was rolled away from the throat, exposing the smooth olive skin. The whole appearance of the man was of a nature one would hardly expect to find among the crew of such a disreputable looking craft.

Alice had difficulty in suppressing a

scream at the suddenness of this apparition. The stranger stood smiling quietly, but made no attempt to address her. Although his eyes were bent on her, his head was turned slightly aside, as though he was listening for something. Alice dropped her eyes and made a movement to pass him, but the stranger stretched out a detaining hand.

"Don't go," he said, in excellent English, showing his teeth in an evil smile.

"Pardon," said Alice hurriedly, "but I must rejoin my party."

"Don't go," he repeated.

Alice fell back a step. Her heart was beating rapidly, but she managed outwardly to retain her composure.

At this moment three men broke through the undergrowth and came out on the shore of the cove. Two of them were small, undersized men of nondescript appearance, evidently Cubans or low-class Spaniards, of the riffraff which one meets along the beaches of the Windward Islands. The third was a burly, black Jamaica negro; the coarse, flat features, the thick lips, and the brilliant red

handkerchief bound around his head, contributing their part to a singularly brutal and repulsive entirety. All three carried long, murderous looking knives in their belts, and taken altogether they were about as villainous a looking set of ruffians as one would want to meet in an out of the way place.

Alice, now thoroughly alarmed, attempted to pass by the group, but the first comer, who seemed to exercise some authority over the others, suddenly reached out and seized her by the wrist.

"Here, none of that," he cried roughly, "you come with me."

Alice screamed as she felt his hand upon her, and tried to wrench herself free, but the effort was unavailing, and one of the other men seizing her free arm, she was rapidly dragged down to the shore.

"Hurry up, boys, and get this baggage into the boat, and we will come back for the captain."

Alice's heart sank as she realized the uselessness of the struggle, but her cry had

evidently reached the ear of someone, for rapid steps were heard coming along the beach, and in another moment Craig broke through the bushes and appeared on the top of the bank. His eye took in the situation at a glance, and like a raging berserker he charged down the slope into the group. The big negro turned to intercept him, but, ducking under the blow that was aimed at him, Craig landed his fist full on the point of the jaw. The black went down as if struck by a steam hammer and lay where he fell. The two Cubans had hardly time to turn to meet the onslaught when Craig was upon them. Seizing the nearest around the body, with a supreme effort of strength he lifted him from the ground and dashed him upon his companion, who was just drawing his knife. The two men went down in a heap, but as Craig turned to face his last antagonist he tripped over a piece of driftwood and fell on top of the pile. Instantly the beach was a kaleidoscope of flying arms and writhing bodies.

Alice gave a scream as Craig went down,

and then watched the struggle, wide-eyed but silent.

The breathing of the combatants came heavily but in gasps, as they struggled to turn each other under. The Cubans had lost their knives in the melee, and as Craig was unarmed the struggle was purely one of brute force.

In spite of the odds it seemed as if the engineer would get the better of the encounter. His antagonists were both small men, and singly would have been no match for him, but the negro was beginning to show signs of consciousness, and Alice felt that she must do something. The fighting instinct of her forefathers was rising within her. The look of terror in her eyes was rapidly giving place to the light of battle. The Spaniard, with one hand grasping her wrist, was carelessly twirling his moustache and calmly awaiting the outcome of the struggle. Suddenly, as the negro was raising his head from the sand, Alice turned and sank her sharp, white teeth into the flesh of the Spaniard's forearm. With an

oath he released his hold on her wrist, and swinging his arm around in a back-hand blow, struck her full on the forehead, staggering her and bringing her to her knees.

"Take that, you she devil!" he cried, with a string of blood-curdling profanity, and drawing his knife he sprang toward the heap of struggling men.

Alice felt faint and dizzy, but her spirit was not subdued. Seizing a heavy billet of driftwood she staggered to her feet prepared to renew the fight. The Spaniard was circling around the struggling mass, watching for a chance to use his knife. Once more Craig, by a supreme effort, succeeded in turning both his assailants under him, and the Spaniard drew back his arm to thrust the knife in his unprotected back, when the billet of driftwood, swung with all the power at Alice's command, struck him just above the elbow, paralyzing his arm and sending the knife flying from his grasp. At the same moment a shove precipitated him on top of the panting, struggling mass. The new arrival was promptly sucked into the whirl-

pool of the fight, for the Cubans had by this time lost their heads, and were fighting aimlessly. In the tangle of arms and bodies recognition was impossible; every man was fighting for himself.

Alice hung over the pile watching for a chance to use her club again, but the rapid contortions of the combatants gave her scant opportunity.

At last it seemed as if the fortunes of the struggle would rest with Craig, for he had got the Spaniard by the throat and was bending him back across the bodies of the other two, when Alice suddenly felt herself thrust to one side and a burly form interposed between her and the heap of struggling men. Just as Craig was forcing the Spaniard's head back into the sand, the butt of a heavy revolver descended with crushing force on his unprotected head, and without a sound he sank forward unconscious.

CHAPTER XVII

PRISONERS

THE individual whose intervention had produced such decisive results was a tremendous figure, standing over six feet, three inches in his boots. His massive proportions dwarfed into insignificance even the burly form of the negro. With hands thrust deep into the pockets of a worn and rusty reefing jacket, and little twinkling eyes that looked out from a rugged weather-beaten face, he surveyed the scene.

“Well, you’re a pretty lookin’ lot of beach combers, you be,” he remarked sarcastically, at the same time ejecting about a gill of tobacco juice from his mouth, and wiping off the residue, which ran down the rusty stubble of his beard, with the back of his hand. “Looks like I’d have to get a wet nurse for some of yer. You sure be a rum-lookin’ bunch. Come, Jupe,” address-

ing the negro, who was sitting up looking at the scene in a dazed and stupid manner, "get a bucket of sea water and let's see if there's any life in this rooster; he seems to be some tough."

A heavy kick in the small of the back from the stout sea boots he wore emphasized the command, and at once galvanized the negro into activity. Going to the whaleboat he got out a bucket and dashed some salt water on Craig's bruised and bleeding head.

The Spaniard had meanwhile arisen and was carefully flicking the sand from his clothing, at the same time regarding his prostrate adversary with an evil smile. Several dark blotches on either side of his windpipe testified to the power of the grip which Craig had fastened upon his throat.

The two Cubans, bruised and battered, had also gained their feet and were cursing volubly as they took account of their injuries.

Alice, overwhelmed at the sudden turn of affairs, had sunk down on the sand, incapable of further effort.

“ Well, where did yer find this bunch of trouble, Manuel? ” inquired the captain, for the big man was evidently the leader of the party.

“ Didn’t find them,” replied Manuel sullenly, “ they found us.”

“ Have yer seen their boat? ”

“ Yes, she is over on the other side of the island, with her bows half out of water. Must have run on the beach in the night. They’ll have a nice time getting her off.”

“ Yes, I know; I seen her myself.”

“ See any signs of life about her? ”

“ No, they must all be asleep.”

“ She would make pretty nice picking. If we could get aboard without being heard we might take her.”

“ Manuel, you’re a fool! Do yer want to get your bloomin’ block knocked off? There must be a dozen hands aboard that packet, and if they’re all like this cock of the walk here, what chance would yer have? No, no, that ain’t our lay. They’re high and dry and the tide’s goin’ out. They won’t be able to git her off before midnight anyway.

Meanwhile we'll take yer friends here aboard the *Pretty Polly*, and be gettin' an offin'. If we once get our masthead below the sky line, I'll stump the devil himself to find us among the islands. This 'ere is a real lady. I can tell by her looks, and them swell guys will loosen up big on their wads to get her back right side up with care."

While this dialogue was going on, the negro was assiduously searching Craig's pockets, bringing to light a bunch of keys, a penknife, some odds and ends, and a round metal box about the size of a pocket compass. These the captain took charge of, thrusting them into the capacious pockets of his reefer.

The still unconscious form of Craig was bundled uncereemoniously into the whaleboat. The Cubans took the oars. The Spaniard assumed his place at the steering oar in the stern, while the negro stood by the bows ready to shove off. When these preparations had been completed, the captain approached the place where Alice was crouching on the sand.

“ Well, young lady,” he announced, exposing his long yellow teeth with an evil leer, which was meant to be a smile of encouragement, “ can we persuade yer to take a short cruise with us on the *Pretty Polly*? Your own boat seems to be out of the runnin’ at present. We’re a rough crowd, but we’s not so bad as we look. I’m Cap’n Smith, Cap’n William Smith, better known as Bad Bill, but that’s only for the beach combers. I’m always nice to the ladies, and they’s always nice to me. Let me help yer into the boat.”

He stretched out his hand to draw her to her feet with another significant leer, but Alice sprang up without assistance. If he expected resistance he was disappointed, for, transfixing him with a look of unutterable repugnance, she went swiftly to the boat, and taking her place in the stern sheets, drew Craig’s damaged head into her lap and began to bathe it with water, which she dipped up from over the side with her handkerchief.

The distance to the *Pretty Polly* was

quickly covered, and as soon as the party gained her deck, preparations were hurriedly made for getting under-way. The whaleboat was paid out astern, the mainsail set, and the anchor broken loose from the bottom, and as soon as her bows had fallen off, the jib was run up, and the *Pretty Polly* began to reach slowly out of the cove.

Alice had been led below into the dirty and ill-smelling cabin and thrust into one of the small staterooms that opened into it. Her protest at being separated from Craig had been ignored, and the last she had seen of him he was being carried down the hatchway into the hold. As the *Pretty Polly* worked out into the open sea, she began to pitch and roll considerably. The motion, after the smooth and swallow-like skimming of the *Sabine*, was decidedly unpleasant. Locked into the small and stuffy stateroom, with no help from the outside possible, the situation looked dark and gloomy, but Alice reflected that these men were ordinary ruffians whose God was money. Here, at least, her wealth would be able to buy her freedom

and immunity. She decided that as soon as she could have an interview with the captain she would offer him ten thousand dollars to land Craig and herself at the nearest port, and she smiled to herself at the thought of being able to turn the tables on her original captor so neatly.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FATE OF THE PRETTY POLLY

“ I SAY the girl is mine! ”

Alice awoke with a start. Exhausted by the excitement of the day, she had dropped asleep sitting on the edge of the berth. It was pitch dark, but little lines of light showed through the cracks in the sheathing from the cabin beyond.

Alice rose and stole softly to the partition. By placing her eye close to the largest of the cracks, she was able to command a very good view of the cabin.

An oil lamp was swinging from a bracket overhead, and seated at the table were the captain and the Spaniard called Manuel. A greasy pack of cards was scattered over the board, and a big black bottle stood between them.

“ I say the girl is mine,” repeated the Spaniard, bringing his fist down on the table angrily.

The captain helped himself to a stiff glass of rum from the bottle, and regarded his companion with a drunken grin. "So you was a-sayin' before," he observed sagely.

"She is my prisoner. I found her," contended the Spaniard, falling back on argument, after the manner of the man who finds that vehemence is not producing the desired result. "You know the law. We will divide the ransom, but while she is here the girl is mine."

"There ain't no law aboard this craft but my law, Manuel. Don't yer make no mistake about that."

The Spaniard glared across the table at his impassive companion. His hand started to make a movement towards his belt. It seemed as if he was about to draw a knife, but he evidently reconsidered his purpose, for he gathered up the pack of cards and shuffled them fiercely.

"That's right, Manuel, deal 'em out, deal 'em out, my son. It's a jack pot this time. Come up with your ante."

The captain poured out another stiff glass

of rum and passed the bottle across the table, and the angry voices sank to an occasional growl, intermingled with the shuffle of cards and the click of chips.

Alice felt the blood-chill in her veins at the thought of being in the power of such brutes. Fate had pounced upon her and torn her ruthlessly from a position of growing security, only to cast her pitilessly upon the waves of chance. She sat down again weakly on the edge of the berth, picking nervously at the hem of her skirt, and listening to the ominous sounds that came from beyond the partition.

As she sat there shivering in the darkness, a peculiar scratching sound attracted her attention. She listened attentively. It seemed to come from the other side of the bulkhead near the foot of the berth. Rising to her feet she quickly traced the sound to its source. Someone was tapping gently on the other side of the partition. As she dropped to her knees to accurately locate the sound, a sibilant whisper came through a crack in the sheathing.

"Alice! Miss Huntington! Are you there?"

It was Craig's voice, and even amid the darkness and despair it thrilled her strangely.

"Yes, I am here," she whispered back. "Are you badly hurt?"

"No, I think not. My head feels like a balloon, but I guess it will come around all right. Where are we?"

"We are on the schooner. They have left the island and put out to sea."

"The devil! I beg your pardon. What time is it?"

"I do not know. It must be about midnight, I should think."

"Do you know what course they are steering?"

"No. They must be before the wind, though. The schooner has been running on an even keel."

"That would bring us about southwest, if the trades are holding. Did you see them when they went through my pockets?"

"Yes."

" Who got the booty? "

" The captain."

" Did you notice them take a little bronze box? "

" Yes. He has it in the pocket of his reefer."

" That is the *Sabine's* remote control box. Our only chance is to get hold of it. Will you ever forgive me for getting you into such a mess? "

" Sh! Don't talk of that now. Let us consider how we are going to get out of it."

" Alice."

" What? "

" If anything happens to me always remember that — that I loved you."

The sound of renewed quarrelling in the outer cabin broke in upon the reply.

Alice flew to the partition and glued her eye to the crack. The two men were still sitting at the table. The captain seemed to be considerably the worse from the effects of the copious libations he had absorbed from the bottle.

The Spaniard was flushed and angry, but

perfectly sober. The argument had evidently swung around to the original cause of dispute, and was being carried on with increasing vehemence on the one side and drunken obstinacy on the other.

Manuel had just dashed his cards down on the table, and his angry voice, vibrant with fierce intensity, was still ringing in the air.

"I say the girl is mine, and I *will* have her. I'll have her in spite of all the fiends out of hell."

The captain leaned back in his chair with the evil, maudlin leer still on his face. Then he suddenly leaned forward, and with a quickness of movement astonishing in one in his condition, whipped out a heavy revolver from the pocket of his coat and shoved the cold muzzle full in the face of the excited Spaniard.

"Shay it again," he grinned sardonically. "Shay it again, my son. I don't hear so well."

Manuel sank back in his chair like a leopard cowed in the act of springing.

The captain laughed tauntingly and spun the weapon around his finger by the trigger guard. "What's the matter, Manuel? What's the matter, my boy? Yer don't seem to be so ardent as you was. Nothin' like cold lead to cool them unruly passions. 'None but the brave deserves the fair,' and you always was a yellow-livered cuss."

The Spaniard's face flushed darkly at the insult, but under the menace of the pistol he controlled his rage, only muttering,— "The girl belongs to me by right, and you know it; that is the law."

"The law!" The captain's laugh rang out loud and uproariously. "All the law there is on this packet lies right in this little pill box, Manuel, and don't you forget it. I can pick out your teeth with it, one at a time, across the cabin, and you know it. If I couldn't I wouldn't be cap'n of the *Pretty Polly* ten minutes."

The captain shoved the revolver back into his pocket and helped himself generously from the bottle. He was well in his cups by this time and growing garrulous.

The Spaniard watched him with smouldering eyes, in whose depths lurked murder.

Pushing the bottle across the table, the captain leaned back in his chair, and, hooking his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat, smiled a benign and bibulous smile at his first officer.

“Cheer up, Manuel,” he grinned. “Don’t show so down-hearted. Drown your sorrows for the loss of the lady in the flowin’ bowl. As the poet says, ‘She is destined for a better man.’ If I feel like takin’ a partner in my joys and sorrows, who’s a-goin’ to prevent me? If I find it cold and lonely in this state of single blessedness, if I want a wife to comfort and sympathize with me, who’s a-goin’ to say no, — who’s a-goin’ to say no to Cap’n Bill? Look nice in the society papers, wouldn’t it, Manuel? ‘Married. Captain William Smith, Esquire, to the daughter of his Royal Dukelets. The happy pair is spendin’ their honeymoon on the bridegroom’s yacht, the *Pretty Polly*; present whereabouts unknown.’ Look fine, wouldn’t it, Manuel? Cheer up, my boy!

Make you besht man. Nothin' small 'bout Cap'n Bill. Make you besht man, or minister, either. Take your choice. Nothin' small 'bout Cap'n Bill Smith. You'd make a fine parson, Manuel, with that sanctimonious face of yours. Must have one little, sweet kiss from the bride to be, Man., just one little kiss before we turn in."

He lurched drunkenly to his feet and staggered across the cabin. The stateroom door was jerked open roughly, revealing Alice white and rigid upon the threshold. In an instant, in spite of her struggles, she was drawn into his arms. She saw his coarse, bloated face bending over her and felt his hot, impregnated breath upon her cheek, and then—the Spaniard slipped around the table like a cat. For an instant Alice saw his face over the captain's shoulder, then something flashed in the lamplight. The captain grunted heavily, and his muscles relaxed. A tremor shot through his powerful frame. Releasing her, he stumbled across the cabin and sank weakly into a chair. The Spaniard had regained his place behind the

table, and was coolly wiping his knife upon the sleeve of his coat.

“ That was a dirty trick, Manuel, a dirty Dago trick. I’ll fix you when I get on my feet, you son of a gun; I’ll fix you good and plenty.”

A violent fit of coughing interrupted his tirade, and a thin stream of blood trickled from his lips and ran down his beard. The captain was fumbling clumsily in his pocket for the revolver, but Manuel held it up to the light with a sardonic smile, and then thrust it carefully into the sash about his waist.

Alice gazed upon the scene stunned and horrified. Deeds of violence had meant to her hardly more than sensational headlines in the newspapers. She scarcely comprehended what had happened.

The captain’s head had dropped forward and was rolling from side to side. His eyes were glazing and the breath was coming in whistling gasps from his throat. Summoning the remnant of his vitality, he leaned forward and attempted to struggle to his

feet, but his strength was unequal to the task. In making the attempt he lost his balance, and pitching forward, fell on his face on the cabin floor.

"Oh, oh!" cried Alice, wringing her hands, "can nothing be done for him? Can't you help him?"

The Spaniard shrugged his shoulders as she dropped on her knees beside the wounded man and tried to turn him over. Then he went to the companionway and spoke to the man at the wheel.

As Alice touched the body of the captain, she felt a convulsive shudder run through it, a whistling exhalation of breath swept past her like the rush of a spirit, and she felt the mortal clay grow rigid under her hand.

In the midst of his violence, and without one moment of warning or preparation, Captain Smith had gone to face his last accounting.

In the shock of the knowledge, in the horror and revulsion of feeling, Alice's presence of mind did not entirely desert her.

The Spaniard's back was turned toward her as he stood looking up the companionway. Setting her teeth and nerving herself for the repugnant task, she thrust her hand hurriedly into the pocket of the Captain's reefer. Her heart gave a quick throb as she felt her fingers touch the little bronze control box. Drawing it forth she thrust it hurriedly into her bosom. When the Spaniard turned, she was closing the staring eyes of the dead man, outwardly as calm as a hospital nurse.

Steps were soon heard in the companionway, and the two Cubans entered the cabin. Manuel spoke to them in Spanish dialect and pointed to the body. The men listened stolidly without visible emotion. Evidently Captain Smith had not been the idol of his crew.

When Manuel had finished his harangue, the two men picked up the body by the legs and shoulders and dragged it up the companionway. A moment later a heavy splash alongside indicated with what pomp and ceremony the remains of their late com-

mander had been consigned to their last resting place.

When the men had disappeared the Spaniard turned to Alice with his sinister smile and said, "If the Senorita will return to her cabin, we will consider her case and advise her of our intentions in the morning."

"But you will let me have a light," pleaded Alice; "you surely do not intend to keep me in that black hole without even a candle?"

The Spaniard laughed shortly. "You may take the cabin lamp if you wish. I shall be on deck."

Alice thankfully took the light and returned to her stateroom.

Craig was on the other side of the partition, torn and rent with anxiety to know what had happened. The sounds of the dispute had come muffled and indistinct to him, so that he had only the faintest idea of what was transpiring. In a few moments Alice had acquainted him with what had taken place and her success in recovering the control box.

It was now necessary to release Craig and get the box into his possession. With the aid of the lamp Alice looked around her quarters, and perceiving a small chest among the heterogeneous litter under the berth, she pulled it out into the room. It proved to contain a miscellaneous collection of nails, bits of iron and broken tools. Among them was an old rusty bit and a bit-stock. As this seemed to be the only cutting tool which an exhaustive search revealed, she pulled the chest over in one corner, where, if need be, it could conceal her work, and attacked the bulkhead energetically. The wood was tough and well seasoned, and the tool was dull, and the cramped position she was forced to assume made her muscles ache, but at the end of an hour she had succeeded in getting eight holes through the partition in a small circle, and Craig had been able to break out the enclosed space. She could now pass the bit-stock and the control box through the opening.

The transfer had hardly been accomplished, and the two were about to concoct

a definite plan of action when steps were heard in the companionway. Hastily pushing the chest in front of the opening, Alice seated herself on the edge of the berth and endeavoured to compose her countenance.

In another moment, without the ceremony of announcing himself, the door was thrown open and Manuel appeared on the threshold. His self-acquired authority evidently induced a feeling of profound satisfaction, for his shoulders were thrown back more than usual, and his thin lips were wreathed in a quiet, satisfied smile. The captain's revolver, the insignia and bulwark of his authority, reposed in a leather holster belted around his waist, while the murderous stiletto, which had effected a change of dynasty on board the *Pretty Polly*, was thrust through a crimson sash which he wore. Without hesitation or parley he stated his business.

"The Senorita will come on deck. I wish to speak with her."

"In just a moment," responded Alice,

rising with alacrity. "Allow me to arrange my attire, please."

She hoped he would withdraw long enough to allow her a word with Craig, but the Spaniard's accession to authority was too recent to permit him to brook any delay in obeying his commands.

"The Senorita looks very charming as she is. She will come at once."

Seeing that resistance was useless, Alice gathered her wraps about her and ascended to the deck.

Craig heard her retreating footsteps with something akin to despair. He was face to face with the most intricate problem of his career. True, he had again in his possession the controlling mechanism which governed the *Sabine's* movements. The box was, in reality, nothing but a small switch and rheostat which received and transmitted current through terminals of omnium to the segment and two metal balls on the controller pedestal on board the *Sabine*. By means of this little instrument, he could set in motion the electric waves which would start her

motors and control her steering apparatus, but, shut up in the dark hold of a schooner, without means of knowing what was going on outside, even if he could bring the *Sabine* in sight, he could not intelligently direct her movements.

He wished that he had had time to arrange a set of signals with Alice, perhaps that might still be possible, but in the meantime he must make the attempt to solve the problem alone. If he could calculate the course and distance with sufficient accuracy, to bring the *Sabine* within sight, he figured that the commotion her appearance would cause would betray her presence to him, even immured as he was in the dark depths of the schooner's hold, and the subsequent movements of the schooner might give him a clue as to her bearings.

The *Sabine* lay on the north side of the island, her bows run up on the beach and pointing almost due south as Craig remembered it. Her steering pointer was set for a westerly course. Closing the switch of the controller box, Craig moved the arm which

controlled the steering arrow on the *Sabine* until the latter pointed due south. He then pressed the lever which started the motors and backed the yacht off the beach into deep water. Allowing sufficient time for her to get well clear of the island, he reversed the current and released the steering mechanism from the deflecting influence of the controller box.

If all had gone well the *Sabine* would immediately start forward and swing into her westerly course. Allowing her sufficient time to get well clear of the island, Craig again shifted the arm of the controller box to bring the *Sabine* upon a southwest course. So far the problem had been easy; the difficulties would now begin. If the *Pretty Polly* had kept away dead before the trade wind, as her gently rolling motion would seem to indicate, her present position would be somewhere to the southwest of the island. Assuming an average speed of six knots, which was as high as weather conditions seemed to warrant, her distance would be approximately one hundred and twenty nautical miles.

To guide the *Sabine* by means of the remote controller over one hundred and twenty miles of trackless ocean to within sight of a moving speck upon its surface, whose position he did not accurately know, was the problem which confronted him. It was the task of the needle and the haystack, with a blind man as the searcher.

With hardly a hope of success, Craig pressed the lever which turned on the full power of the *Sabine's* motors, and settled down to a systematic trial of the case. He shuddered to think of what would happen should anything floating cross the path of the yacht when travelling at the frightful speed he knew she must be making, but the risk must be run, and the chase was over a part of the ocean unfrequented by vessels following the trade routes.

As he started his plan in operation the nautical clock in the cabin struck eight bells. The sound came faint but distinctly audible to him through the heavy bulkhead. The first pale glow of the dawn was beginning to filter through the deadlights into the state-

room beyond, and Craig could now make out the aperture in the partition, a small gray patch in the engulfing darkness.

He determined to keep the *Sabine* on her southwest course for two hours, and then begin to zigzag back and forth across this course, increasing the length and angle of her tacks in a regular progression as the time went on. In this way he could sweep a broad expanse of ocean, and if his calculations had been correct there was a faint chance of success. The cabin clock would be an invaluable aid to him in the plan, as it struck the bells every half hour, allowing him to time his movements accurately.

Having set his plan in motion, Craig selected a place where the berth in the state-room would conceal his operations, and attacked the bulkhead with his rusty auger. By boring a sufficient number of holes, he hoped to be able to cut out a square in the partition large enough to allow him to crawl through into the cabin. The work was heart-breaking, for the partition was of oak, and the worm on the bit was so far gone that

the tool had to be forced into the wood by main strength.

Hour after hour Craig worked at the task. With every hole that he forced through the bulkhead his cutter became duller, but with every hole his outlet to freedom became nearer of accomplishment. The hot, stagnant atmosphere of the hold pressed heavily upon him. His limbs were drenched with perspiration, and his muscles ached with the heavy labour. His injured head throbbed dully, and a metal band seemed to be tightening about his forehead.

He wondered if it was the intention of his captors to starve him to death, as he had had no attention since being cast into the place, and the fear continually assailed him that, in spite of his calculations, the course of the schooner might have been changed. Had Captain Smith remained in charge this would undoubtedly have been done, but the powers of strategy of the present commander did not suggest to him the desirability of such an expedient.

No sound came to Craig in his dark prison

but the occasional creaking of the boom, as the schooner rolled gently in the long swells, and the soft ripple of the water as it slipped along the side. Craig wondered dully what had become of Alice, but no sound from the deck came to give him an inkling of what was transpiring above. Every time the cabin clock struck the bells, he altered the course of the *Sabine* according to his plan, but as the hours dragged on he began to despair of any result.

He was just wondering whether he had not planted his holes sufficiently thick to enable him to kick out the enclosed piece of the panel when his attention was attracted by a commotion on deck. Muffled shouts and the rattle of blocks came faintly to his ears, and he felt the heel of the vessel as she was braced sharply up on the wind. Evidently the *Sabine*, or something else, was in sight. If he could only get a glance from the deck. He attacked the bulkhead with redoubled fury.

Suddenly, in the midst of the confusion, he heard Alice's clear, resonant voice in-

tonating the bell song from the operatic success of the season, "The Mountain Monastery." At the beginning of each strain she would strike the treble "C" and then firmly and clearly strike the fourth above. Instantly it flashed over Craig what she was trying to do, and he blessed and marvelled at the ready wit of the girl. She was signalling to him the position of the yacht, as the detector would have signalled it.

The *Sabine* must be broad on the starboard beam. Craig dropped the bit-stock and touched the arm of the controller box. Immediately Alice responded with a cadenza which ended with a diminished seventh. The commotion on deck redoubled. The rattle of blocks, the slapping of canvas and the heeling of the schooner showed that the course was being changed again.

Once more Alice's bell-like voice struck the treble "C" and then soared upward like a bird to the octave. The *Pretty Polly* was in full flight. The *Sabine* must be directly astern, but at what distance Craig had no means of knowing.

Suddenly Craig felt the schooner's helm put down. As she shot trembling up into the wind a chorus of frightened cries arose from her deck, mingled with a single scream, "Stop her! "

The next moment there was a terrific crash, and Craig was hurled across the deck against the side of the schooner. Instinctively he had clung to the controller box and almost before he struck he had shut off the power, but not before a second crash had given the schooner her death blow.

Bruised and bleeding Craig struggled to his feet and threw himself desperately against the panel, kicking at it savagely with his feet. Under the fury of his assault, the wood finally gave way, and crawling through the aperture he made his way into the cabin.

The schooner was lying on her beam ends, and he could hear the water pouring into her in torrents through a great rent in her side. As he crawled up the companionway, she gave a convulsive shudder and elevating her stern, plunged, bow first, beneath the waves.

As soon as Craig got his head above the surface from the considerable depth to which he had been carried down by the vortex formed by the sinking of the schooner, his first glance was for Alice. His heart gave a great throb as he saw her dark brown hair just topping the crest of a wave near him. She must have jumped before the schooner went down, and succeeded in getting far enough away to prevent being drawn under.

A few strokes were sufficient to carry Craig to her side, and the look of relief and joy which overspread her face when she saw him amply repaid him for all he had gone through in the last few hours. She was heavily weighed down by her clothing, but with admirable presence of mind she was not exhausting herself by useless struggles, merely keeping herself afloat.

The *Sabine* was floating quietly some twenty or thirty yards from them with the gangway ladder hanging over the side just as they had left it the preceding morning. She showed no signs of the terrific collision

which she had had with the schooner, but rode the waves as serenely and buoyantly as a duck.

Placing Alice's hand on his shoulder, Craig struck out for the yacht. Ordinarily the swim would have been nothing for him, but exhausted by his recent exertions, and weakened by the blow he had received on the head, he was all but gone when he reached the gangway, and to draw himself up on the ladder and assist his companion to the deck were tasks which taxed the remnant of his strength to the utmost.

Leaving Alice in the chart house, Craig returned to the deck to see if he could discover any trace of the crew of the ill-fated schooner. The sea was littered with wreckage, and he had seen several heads bobbing up and down in the water as he was swimming for the yacht. An earnest and careful scrutiny, however, failed to reveal any signs of life. The crew of the *Pretty Polly* had gone down with her to a man. As is frequently the case with those who follow the sea, not one of them could swim. With their

crimes all unrepented, and the curses still on their lips, they had followed their murdered captain into the great port of the unknown.

Cruising slowly around in the vicinity of the wreckage until there was no further possibility of rescuing any of the doomed wretches, Craig returned to the pilot house, and with a saddened heart put the *Sabine* back on her course to the westward.

CHAPTER XIX

ALADDIN'S PALACE

WHEN Alice awoke from the heavy, unbroken, dreamless sleep, which the excitement and tension of their terrible experience had produced, her first sensation was one of extreme hunger. The soft hum of the motors and the peculiar gliding motion she had become so accustomed to on the yacht were missing; evidently the *Sabine* had temporarily suspended her wanderings for some reason or other. Hastily rising she made her morning acquaintance with the shower in her fairy grotto, and with her body glowing from the exhilarating effects of the needle spray, she hurriedly donned the blue yachting suit she was accustomed to wear and prepared to ascend to the deck.

On reaching the saloon, however, the longing of her physical being for nourishment constrained her, and turning aside she made

her way forward to the pantry. She had long since familiarized herself with this part of the ship. On ransacking the larder she found ample food to satisfy the first keen edge of her hunger. The silence on board the yacht was deep and unbroken, but Alice did not mind that. Silence and tranquillity seemed to find their natural throne on board the *Sabine*, and Alice's city-deafened ears had long since grown accustomed to it. After hastily partaking of some cold salad and coffee, which she prepared over one of the little electric stoves, Alice removed the remains of her repast and ascended to the deck.

On emerging from the chart house, she found the *Sabine* high and dry upon the beach of a beautiful tropical island. The island was apparently about a mile and a half long and possibly half that distance in width, and was roughly oval in shape. A long reef of black, barnacle-encrusted rocks ran along one side of it and around the point at the end, forming a deep pocket or lagoon about an eighth of a mile wide. The *Sabine*

had been beached at the very bottom of this little bay, where the conformation of the land concealed her from anyone examining the lagōon from the entrance.

The island rose on all sides from the water in a gentle slope to a little knoll in the centre, whose summit was crowned with a flourishing growth of palm trees, and nestling snugly among their sturdy trunks, embowered in their luxuriant foliage, the low eaves and sloping roofs of a tiny bungalow were seen perched upon the topmost summit of the rise.

Craig was nowhere to be seen, but the lowered gangway and the footprints on the sand gave evidence that he was on the island. Alice gathered her skirts about her and descended to the beach. Stepping out upon the hard, white sand she turned, and for the first time had an opportunity to examine the entire under body of the strange and remarkable craft on which she was nominally a prisoner. The *Sabine* was resting on two huge wheels, which were embedded, one in the forward part of the keel, and the

other in the large and heavily moulded rudder at the stern, which raised her keel about two feet from the beach. A row of smaller wheels or rollers set close together along the keel were provided to take care of any sudden inequalities in the ground over which she moved, but as her rolling equipment had been provided more especially for use on the ocean bottom, they were seldom needed. The same gyrostats which served to steady her in a seaway, and which gave her her smooth and gliding movement through the water, served also to keep her on an even keel when out of her natural element, and Alice, as she stood there examining the craft, could hear their faint, rhythmic hum as they rotated smoothly upon their oil cushions. Two dark, cavernous openings, like the blowholes of some huge, amphibious monster, were placed under the bows close to the keel, and served to feed the huge rotary pumps that supplied the powerful jets which propelled the yacht at her phenomenal speed.

Alice, absorbed in the examination of the yacht, was suddenly interrupted by a loud

and joyous barking, and looking up she saw a flying form come bounding down the hill to meet her. It was Boris, her favourite Russian wolfhound. The great brute leaped and fawned about her, giving tongue to his delight in short, sharp yelps, and seemed about to turn himself inside out in a veritable paroxysm of joy. Calming the exuberant enthusiasm of her pet, Alice took the well used path leading up from the water and ascended the hill, at the top of which stood the cosy little bungalow.

Craig met her on the front porch, and greeted her with a profound Oriental salaam.

“ Welcome to your kingdom, O Princess! The palace is prepared for you. The guests are assembled and everything is ready. Where will it please your Royal Highness to be crowned? ”

“ Do you call this a kingdom? ” responded Alice. “ Why this is not as big as the golf links at Ardsley, and Papa has a shooting preserve in the Adirondacks that you could lose this little two-penny island in and never find it again.”

“ That may be very true, Princess, but you must know that it is not size, but quality that counts in a kingdom. You shall be queen not only of the land but of the sea, and of the land under the sea, and your kingdom shall extend as far as the eye can reach, and Boris and I will be your loyal and devoted subjects. You shall have dominion over the fowl of the air, the beasts of the fields, and the fish in the sea, and over all things that walketh or crawleth upon the earth, or in the waters under the earth. Observe how you are walled and buttressed about by cruel reefs. No hostile prow will ever dare approach your domain in the face of these armed and sleepless guardians. The mouth of the lagoon, or shall we say the postern gate, is closed by two loud-mouthed torpedoes, whose stentorian voices shall never fail to warn us of the enemies’ approach. He will, indeed, be a bold pirate who attempts to force our stronghold, won’t he, Boris? ”

The big hound looked up into his face with liquid, intelligent eyes, as if to say, “ What-

ever you and my mistress decree must be so."

"You seem to be proselyting my subjects already," remarked Alice. "I have never shared Boris' allegiance with anyone before. Come here, Boris, I am surprised at you."

The hound came obediently and crouched at her feet, looking from one to the other, as if trying to understand the relation between them.

"You have not explained the presence of my other subject yet. Is this another mystery?"

"Oh, no. The hound missed you, and I knew you were fond of him, so I borrowed him. He came on board the other night at Key West."

"So you borrowed him, did you? In the same way that you borrowed me, I presume?"

"Precisely."

"You seem to be a confirmed believer in Wordsworth's 'simple plan, that they should take who have the power, and they should keep who can.'"

" I am afraid you are right; there is an elemental efficacy in the method that is attractive to one of an imaginative trend of mind."

" So we have touched at Key West, have we? When was that, pray? "

" The other evening. You had retired for the night, so I thought I would not disturb you by announcing our arrival."

" You were very considerate. Were there any ships there? "

" Yes; several. I think some of them must have been engaged in searching for you, but as we entered the harbour several feet beneath the surface I do not think they noticed our arrival."

" We must be quite near Key West then," observed Alice tentatively.

" That depends upon your standards of time and distance. Quite near for the *Sabine* might be quite a way off for another ship. You perceive that quite near is a very relative term."

" So I should say. But, tell me, how came the bungalow here? "

"The palace, if your Royal Highness pleases. Why, I built it yesterday, or rather, I put it together. It is constructed on the portable plan, and goes together with bolts."

"You built it yesterday! But, I don't understand. Yesterday we were —"

"Yesterday you were sleeping the sleep of the just — and tired. This is our second day at the island. We arrived early yesterday morning."

"Do you mean to say that I have slept thirty-six hours at a stretch? Why, I never did a thing like that before in my life."

"Probably not, but you see your nerves were somewhat unstrung by your painful experience on board that schooner, and nothing restores one's mental tone like plenty of good sound sleep, so I took the liberty of administering a little harmless sedative to you at supper. It has been beneficial. I can see that in your eyes and in the elasticity of your walk."

"There seems to be no limit to the prerogatives you usurp," said Alice in an annoyed tone.

She was startled and disturbed to have it brought home to her so forcibly, how completely she was in this man's power. The velvet glove so perfectly concealed the iron grasp which he had upon the situation that at times she almost forgot what their actual relations were.

Craig quickly detected the note of anger and annoyance in her voice.

"Indeed there is a limit," he protested, "a very sharp and clearly defined limit. I wish there were not. Some day I hope it will be different."

Alice coloured slightly, and hastened to remove the conversation from the dangerous ground on which it was beginning to encroach. "Shall we inspect the — palace?" she asked.

Craig at once led her within.

The framing of the bungalow was constructed of hewn and polished mahogany logs bolted together with heavy bronze machine bolts. On this structure the panels of the walls and roof were attached by bolting through to heavy ornamental angle irons.

The building was square as to floor plan, and a story and a half in height. The lower floor was entirely given up to a large and airy living room with windows on all sides, and surrounded by a broad covered veranda. The upper floor had been reserved for a boudoir and open-air sleeping apartment for Alice. It was open on all sides, the roof being supported only by the framing timbers. A low parapet ran around it, and the space between it and the broad projecting eaves could be closed by windows and shutters which were hooked up to the rafters when not in use. Access was gained to this apartment by a single staircase which was balanced by a counter-weight, so that it could be raised entirely, closing the opening in the floor and effectually cutting off all access from below.

The view from this upper apartment was magnificent, commanding the island and the full sweep of the ocean in every direction. From its broad parapet the ring of breakers could be seen tumbling in upon the jagged reefs, and enveloping the island in a circling

smother of foam, save only at the northeast, where a narrow opening gave entrance to the quiet waters of the lagoon.

There was no provision for a kitchen; the meals being prepared on the *Sabine* and served from a wheeled hamper on the piazza.

The furniture was comfortable, if scanty, consisting of a few light bamboo tables, couches and chairs, with grass mats scattered about the floor, and the inevitable hammock in variety and abundance.

"Well, Princess, what do you think of your domain?" asked Craig, as they stood by the parapet looking out over the deep blue of the distant ocean.

Alice paused for a moment before replying, — "Why, I think," she responded at last, "that for a prison it is very satisfactory, quite as satisfactory, indeed, as one could expect."

"Palace, you mean, Princess, not a prison, surely."

"Well, you may call it a palace if you wish, but it is a prison nevertheless. At any

rate, palace or prison, it must have been a stupendous undertaking to put it up in one day. I can hardly credit it. You must be a veritable Aladdin, with the wonderful lamp in your coat pocket, and innumerable genii working overtime for you."

"I'm afraid I shall have to deny myself the pleasure of admitting the lamp and the genii, and plead guilty to nothing more startling than to an electric boat-crane. You forget that I have unlimited power at my disposal, and the amphibious nature of the *Sabine* enabled me to apply it where it was needed. By running her up the hill, I was able to use her boat-crane to handle the sections, and it was only a matter of putting in the bolts and tightening them up. Even at that, though, it was a rather robust job for one day, and necessitated stretching it considerably at either end."

CHAPTER XX

THE MAGIC OF THE MOON

ONE evening Craig was seated on the veranda enjoying his after-dinner cigar, when Alice came out of the living room, where she had been reading, and expressed a desire to walk out to the edge of the grove, from which point could be seen the surf as it broke in the moonlight on the rocks at the mouth of the lagoon.

“Most willingly, O Princess,” acquiesced Craig with alacrity. “You have but to command.”

Slowly, side by side they walked through the vaulted isles of their sylvan cathedral to the selected coign of vantage. The moonlight was flooding everything in a shower of silvery radiance, and the soft, cool breath of the trade winds was rustling in the leafy tangle above them. Something of the witchery of the night must have got into Craig’s

blood, for his first words were clothed in the fanciful imagery of the poets.

“‘How sweet the moonlight sleeps on yonder bank.

Here will we sit and let the sound of music creep into
our ears.

Soft stillness and the night become the touches of
sweet harmony.’

“That is not just the way the much mis-quoted William said it,” he laughed, “but that is the way he ought to have said it.”

Craig threw himself down at the foot of a giant palm as he spoke, and looked up along the smooth, round column of its bole to where its luxuriant cluster of waving fronds were tossing their silvered tips against the soft, black velvet of the night.

As if in answer to his words there was borne to their ears the low, sweet breath of muted strings and woodwind, of distant trumpets and the beating of tiny drums. It was the Tel-orchestron on the *Sabine* playing the orchestral arrangement of “The Dance of the Elfs” from the “Moonlight Sonata;” playing it as mortal fingers could never play it. Under the magic of the

music the broad, silvery path of the moon's beams became suddenly peopled with fairy forms twisting, turning, gliding, weaving in and out with gleaming bodies floating in clouds of diaphanous gossamer drapery. One could almost hear the delicate footfalls of fairy spirits dancing on the greensward; the ringing of little silver bells and the blowing of elfin horns.

Far out on the reefs the surf was booming faintly, a deep and distant diapason. Above them the night wind was softly whispering lovers' secrets into the nodding heads of the drowsy palm trees. All the still, small voices of the night were taking up their part in nature's wondrous nocturne, and over all, flooding, inundating, deluging all, was the marvellous magic radiance of a tropic moon.

"It is beautiful! beautiful!" murmured Alice.

"It is beautiful," Craig replied. "It needs but one thing to make it perfect."

"And what is that?"

"Love, supreme and perfect love, the most beautiful thing in the world. 'And

now abideth faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these is love.' ”

“ Oh! don't, please don't! ” she pleaded. “ You will spoil it all. ”

“ Don't! How can I help it! ” he cried passionately. “ Do you think I am a stick or a stone, a mass of dead, insensible, inanimate clay? Oh! Princess, Princess, I love you! With every throb of my heart, with every drop of my blood, with every fibre of my being, I love you! You are my hope of happiness, my dream of bliss, my religion almost. I love you with a love that is more than passion, more than pain, more than life itself, stronger than my hope of heaven, my fear of hell, enduring as eternity. ”

He leaned towards her with glowing eyes, and in her own dark orbs he saw a wondrous light that no man had ever beheld there before. Her long, slender hand lay beside her on the grass, gleaming in the moonlight, white as alabaster, delicate as chiseled ivory. He covered it with his strong, brown one, tense and vibrant as a bowstring. But at his touch, thrilling, burning, almost com-

elling, the charm suddenly dissolved. The spell was broken.

Springing to her feet like a wild thing, she turned and faced him, and the flame in her eyes matched the fire of her words. "I hate you! Oh, I hate you!"

Like a wraith of the night she flitted through the grove and down to the beach.

Craig heard the distant sound of a door slammed. The strains of the Tel-orchestration abruptly ceased.

Far into the night he lay there, white-lipped and rigid; his clenched hands buried in the soft grass of the slope, and his burning eyes fixed unwaveringly, unseeingly upon some intangible, unmarked point upon the distant ocean.

CHAPTER XXI

A SURPRISE AND A RACE

AFTER the outburst of that first evening had subsided, an outburst which the combination of a balmy night and a tropic moon had helped to produce, life on the island settled down into much the same lines that had characterized it on the yacht. Alice spent her days in wandering about the place, making collections of rare ferns and flowers, or floating idly in her crystal bark upon the limpid waters of the lagoon. She explored every nook and cranny of the reef, searching for curious shells, sea urchins, and the rare and delicately beautiful specimens of sea moss with which the rocks abounded. These last she mounted on glass plates until her collection was singularly artistic and complete.

In addition to the electric cable which controlled the two warning torpedoes, Craig had stretched a heavy net across the narrow

mouth of the lagoon, whose stout meshes served to keep out any marauding sharks that might be disposed to enter, and as Alice was usually accustomed to attire herself in her bathing suit for these expeditions on the lagoon, she never hesitated to dive into its pellucid depths for any rare specimens she might chance to see drifting slowly along its sandy bottom.

Craig left her very much to herself, spending most of his time in the laboratory, a circumstance which piqued her not a little. As birds and flowers and specimens were not wholly able to permanently satisfy the desire of her gregarious nature for companionship, it became little by little customary for her to drop into the laboratory in the morning and watch Craig at his work, and at last even to help him with some of his experiments. In thus sharing in his labours she found that she was gradually acquiring a perception of his aims, an insight into the deep and hidden traits of his character, which only a community of interests could bestow.

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How long they would have remained in this pastoral but precarious state, is uncertain, had not the unexpected one day leaped suddenly upon them from its ambush in the great unknown, and at one blow destroyed the sylvan seclusion of their retreat.

One afternoon Alice was lying in the hammock under the trees, reading aloud from her inevitable Shakespere to Craig, who was stretched out on the turf at her feet, enjoying his after-luncheon cigar. The day was a perfect one, soft and balmy and languorous with that sensuous pervading languor of the tropics, so conducive to dreams and the building of castles among the clouds. The low, well-modulated voice of the reader seemed to fit in and harmonize with the scene, as the rippling murmur of a brook harmonizes with sunshine through cool, green branches and the rustle of the west wind among the boughs, as the soft swish of the waves upon the yellow sand and the rattle of descending pebbles harmonized with the dull booming of the surf upon the outer reefs.

“ Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Hark! now I hear them, — Ding-Dong, Bell.”

A subtle change in the timbre of the reader's voice, a note of half-suppressed, half-smothered excitement, caused Craig to look up. Alice was bending over the book with a frown on her brow and a strange light in her eyes. She seemed to be concentrating her thoughts upon the text by a supreme but imperfectly concealed mental effort. Just then Boris, who had been lying asleep near them, raised his head, and looking seaward growled ominously. Craig turned quickly. Just entering the mouth of the lagoon, a long black trail of smoke streaming from her funnels, and the water foaming and boiling under her cutwater, was a large torpedo boat or destroyer. The United States ensign was floating over her stern, and a knot of white-clad officers on her bridge were

attentively examining the island through their binoculars. The destroyer came on rapidly and without hesitation, as one sure of her purpose. The powerful glasses on board had doubtless long since revealed to the lookouts the little group under the palm trees.

Craig gave one look at the destroyer, and then, without the slightest ceremony, turned, and, gathering Alice up in his arms, started on a run through the grove and down the hill to the beach, where the *Sabine* was lying.

Boris, the cause of the premature discovery, barked and frisked along beside them as if he thought the whole affair a great lark.

After one fierce, but ineffectual effort, which served only to tighten the arms around her, Alice made no resistance, but allowed herself to be borne rapidly down to the beach. The pressure of Craig's arms about her sent a strange, but exquisite thrill through her body, and the rapid motion brought the rich colour to her cheeks — while, in the torrent of her thoughts one

thing stood out vividly, Romano's picture of Paris carrying off to his waiting galley the beautiful Helen of Troy.

As they hurried down the hill two heavy reports from the mouth of the lagoon told that the destroyer had passed over the cables which controlled the firing mechanism of the alarm torpedoes. Fortunately the curving of the lagoon hid the *Sabine* from those on board the destroyer, so that their line of retreat could not be seen.

Almost before Craig gained the deck the big wheels began to turn, and as Alice was deposited glowing, but breathless, on the divan in the chart house, the heavy watertight doors slid home and were forced into their sockets. While yet the destroyer was several hundred yards from the point which concealed the *Sabine* from those on her bridge, the yacht slid gently into the lagoon and disappeared beneath the surface.

Within the chart house the two principal actors in the scene faced each other, the one defiant, the other victorious.

"Well, you certainly treat your captives

with scant courtesy," remarked Alice frigidly.

" 'Needs must when the devil drives,' " responded Craig. " In two minutes more that torpedo boat would have been right on top of us."

As the *Sabine* slowly felt her way out of the lagoon, over the smooth, sandy bottom, the two watchers through the transparent panel in the roof of the chart house saw the destroyer, a long black shadow in the gleaming green, pass directly overhead, and through the sonoric medium in which they were immersed, the hum of her turbines and the beating of her screws came distinctly to their ears.

On reaching the mouth of the lagoon, Craig brought the submarine to the surface and headed her back outside the reef to the westward.

As the yacht opened out the point that hid the lower end of the lagoon, the destroyer was seen hoisting out a boat. Evidently the officer in charge was nonplussed at not finding his prey entrapped at the bottom of the

cul-de-sac, but he seemed determined on an investigation. The appearance of the *Sabine* outside the reef and heading at a fast clip for the open sea, at once put an end to the landing operations.

The whale boat was quickly hoisted in-board, the destroyer's head swung around, and at race-horse speed she headed back for the mouth of the lagoon. As she passed them going in the opposite direction, Craig, through his glass, read her name in gold letters on the stern. It was the *Sampson*, the largest and speediest of Uncle Sam's flyers, and holder of the phenomenal record of forty-four knots on the measured mile. As she swung around the point of the reef, the smoke was pouring from her four funnels in clouds, while an occasional fleck of flame from the top of her stack showed that she was being stoked to the utmost.

The *Sabine* had, in the meantime, placed several miles between her and the island, and was tearing along at an extraordinary pace.

Craig apparently felt the urgency of the situation, for he seemed to be forcing the

yacht to her utmost speed. In spite of his efforts, however, the advantage seemed to be with the destroyer. Slowly but surely she began to cut down the distance between them; the gain was slow, but it was a gain, nevertheless.

Alice could see the group of officers on her bridge, examining them through their glasses, and she felt the tingle of excitement in the race in which she herself was to be the prize.

Craig was standing by the binnacle, watching attentively every movement of the destroyer, and Alice could not refrain from favouring him with a triumphant smile; but as the destroyer crept closer and closer, her feelings began to undergo a strange and subtle change. The instinctive partisan support of one's own, the unreasoning loyalty which always cheers on the home team, which always backs the home city against the country, the nation against the world; the ingrained American determination to win; the intense desire to be first at any cost, to triumph though the heavens fall, was rapidly

overshadowing and replacing her desire for freedom, and her satisfaction in the prospective humbling of her captor.

By the time the *Sampson* had crawled up to within an eighth of a mile, she could stand the pressure no longer. Turning to Craig with clenched hands, and eyes flashing with excitement, she cried, "Why don't you do something? Can't you do anything? They are beating us, and I do hate to be beaten."

Craig laughed outright at this characteristic change of front. "Why, I thought you were enjoying the prospect of seeing me roped, thrown and branded!"

"I was! I was! But this is different! This is a race, and I do hate to lose! I cannot help it. It is temperamental. It was born in me."

"I hate to lose, too," replied Craig shortly.

He turned again to his controller, and for a few moments the *Sabine* seemed to hold her own. The automatic indicator showed forty-four and five-eighths knots, but the jets of oil fuel were beginning to get in their

work under the boilers of the destroyer, and she soon began to gain again. Slowly, inch by inch, the flying foam-flecked prow crept forward until it began to lap the stern of the struggling motor boat. Everything on both vessels was now distinctly visible. The little group of officers on the bridge watched the chase, alert but impassive. The crew lay along the rail excited, but confident witnesses of the struggle.

As the bows of the destroyer began to overlap the stern, Alice turned to Craig with a tense whisper, — “They are going to catch us! We will have to submerge.”

Craig gave her one quick, curious glance, and then stepped from the shelter of the chart house out on to the deck.

“Hello, Burrill!” he hailed, “how are you?”

The short, thick-set officer with the lieutenant commander’s patch on his collar, started slightly.

“Craig! By all that’s holy! Well, I’ll be —! What the devil does all this mean?”

“What are you doing here?” asked

Craig, coolly, ignoring the other's question. "Haven't seen you since we were together on the Isthmus."

"What am I doing here? Well, you ought to know if anyone should. You have stirred up a pretty kettle of fish, I can tell you. The whole torpedo flotilla of the Atlantic fleet is looking for you. The first and second cruiser squadrons are patrolling the passages of the islands, and the scouts have worked as far south as Rio."

"Glad to know it. I'll be on the lookout for them."

"Oh, I guess you won't have to bother. We'll attend to that part of it for you. Well, I never thought that you would turn out a gay Lothario."

"I haven't. Simply a case of scientific research for the advancement of the race."

Burrill laughed. "Well, I hope for your sake you will be able to convince pater familias and the prosecuting attorney of that fact. But come, shut off your power; the jig is up."

"How so?"

“ ‘How so?’ Why, we’ve caught you, haven’t we? ”

“ You have caught up with us, sure; but what are you going to do about it? You can’t board us going at this rate of speed.”

The truth of Craig’s remark was obvious. The two boats were running along side by side not twenty feet apart, but the slightest touch of the helm of either would put yards between them in an instant.

“ Come! come! ” cried the lieutenant impatiently. “ This is rank nonsense. You don’t want to force me to extreme measures, do you? We will try and let you down as easily as possible. The lady has been well treated, hasn’t she? ”

“ To the extent of my ability.”

“ Well, then, the thing can be fixed up some way, I guess. But heave to. It’s no use resisting any longer.”

“ Well, I guess you’ll have to show me,” replied Craig.

“ Do you mean to say that you refuse to surrender? ” shouted the exasperated officer.

“ I guess that’s about the size of it.”

“ Well, d— a fool! ” muttered Burrill under his breath, as he turned from the end of the bridge. But as he faced his second in command, all trace of annoyance vanished, and he was again the calm, alert, impassive commander that reputation depicted him.

“ Mr. Murray, pass the word to pipe to quarters, and send Morgan here. Stand by to hoist out the whale boat, and have the crew ready.”

At the first pipe of the boatswain’s whistle, the crew sprang with alacrity to their stations, and the order, “ Cast loose and provide! ” sent them scurrying after the various implements of their deadly trade.

“ Never mind those one pounders, Murray. I guess Bat Nelson will be all we’ll need for this business.”

The canvas tarpaulin was quickly stripped off the long, lean, three-inch rifle, which was mounted on the roof of the conning tower, and the whale boat was hoisted out on the davits and held ready to drop into the water.

“ Where’ll I plug him? ” asked Morgan, the leather-faced gunner’s mate, as he swung

the breech of his pet to starboard, and rolled his quid to the opposite cheek.

"Take him on the waterline amidships. You're sure that's solid shot? We don't want any shell in this business," said the lieutenant, and then shouted to Craig: "Once more, and for the last time. Will you stop? I'm thoroughly in earnest."

"I guess I'll have to take a chance," replied Craig, as he withdrew to the shelter of the pilot house.

"Well, d—n it, you brought it on yourself. Give it to him, Morgan!"

There was a flash and a roar, and a thin volume of smoke drifted away and dissolved to leeward.

The *Sabine* shivered and trembled in all her parts as the heavy projectile struck within an inch of her waterline, and then an extraordinary thing happened. A large, deep, saucer-shaped depression appeared for an instant in the smooth, rounding side of the hull, as though a baseball had been thrown against the bellying fold of a sail, and then — the dent smoothed itself out, the heavy

shot was stopped and deflected into the water, and the place was as before. Three seconds after the report, except for a dark smudge on her smooth, white side, the on-lookers could not have told where the shot had struck.

The amazement on board the destroyer can better be imagined than described; but Craig gave them no time to recover. As if the impact of the projectile had been the signal for her to uncoil her latent energies, the *Sabine* sprang forward, as if she would leap from the water and mount into the air. Her stem tore through the brine with a sound as of ripping fabric, and a boiling, seething caldron sprang to life under her taffrail. The indicator in the chart house ran up to sixty, and trembled there as if it were going higher.

“Cast loose those one pounders, boys, and see if you can break up his propellers!” roared Burrill. “Lively, lads, he’s getting away from us. Be careful where you shoot.”

But it was too late. Before the guns could be served and pointed, the *Sabine* had placed

yards of open water between her and her pursuer. In less than a minute she had opened up a lead of a quarter of a mile, and was going like a flash of light. In half an hour the destroyer was over seven miles astern, and had given up the chase.

"Well," said Craig, with a grim smile, as he slowed the yacht down to her normal rate of speed, "you say you hate to be beaten; are you satisfied?"

"No," replied Alice testily. "I am not satisfied, and I think it is perfectly detestable in you to remind me of it."



CHAPTER XXII

AT WAR WITH HERSELF

THE advent of the torpedo boat destroyer produced a sudden and unlooked-for change in the life on board the *Sabine*. After the excitement of the chase had subsided, and affairs had once more resumed their normal serenity, Alice was seized with one of those sudden revulsions of feeling which were characteristic of her impulsive and highly strung temperament.

Now that she had leisure to think it over calmly, she was amazed at her own conduct and the motives that had actuated her. Not only had she failed to make the slightest effort to aid her would-be rescuers, but worse, far worse than that, she had openly sided with and supported Craig in his efforts to escape. Hot anger rose within her at the thought.

Craig first became aware that there had

been a change in the atmosphere when he found a brief note from her on the table of the saloon, informing him that she would dine in her own apartments that evening. This table had become their post-office and line of communication during their periods of acute belligerency, and when Craig saw her note lying there he knew at once that active war had once more been declared.

Now that their retreat had been discovered, return to the island was, of course, out of the question, so Craig bowed his head to the tempest, thinking the storm would soon blow over, and once more headed the *Sabine* southward. But the morrow brought no change in the situation, and when, on the second day, his capricious and incomprehensible lady still failed to appear, he began to be seriously alarmed. When the third day had passed without eliciting any signs of relenting from the occupant of the starboard quarters, he hastened to extend the olive branch.

On the saloon table he left a courteous note for her, saying that he was going to try some very interesting experiments in the

laboratory on the following morning, and asking her if she did not wish to be present. In reply he received a curt missive, saying that she was not at present interested in experiments and that she wished, nay, she demanded to be allowed to return immediately to New York.

Craig replied that she could return to New York at any time whenever she was ready to comply with the conditions,—and the battle was on.

Had Craig realized the desperate nature of the struggle that was going on within the confines of the starboard cabin, he would have thrown aside his depression and taken heart. Had he known that pride, and the love he had so long striven to awaken, were at last in arms, and, with all pretence of concealment cast aside, were locked in a fierce death struggle, he would have girded up his loins for the last assault, which would have swept all before it and left him master of the citadel. But being a man, a man of action, unused to feminine society, a man of the wilderness and of the waste places, and

uninstructed in the various and intricate ramifications of a woman's heart, he could not know that Alice, her back to the wall, was fighting her last desperate fight against the insidious and insurgent forces that had long been gathering headway within her entrenchments; those dominant, primitive impulses of the eternal feminine which were undermining her defences, and sweeping away the barriers she had raised against him; those first, green spikes and spear-heads of passion which were forcing their way up through the cold, dark mould of her heart, insignant of the harvest which was to come.

Day after day passed without bringing any change in the situation. Day after day the *Sabine* held her course steadily southward, skirting the lower littoral of the Spanish main. At times the shore loomed dimly like a dark blue cloud upon the distant horizon. At others they would close in, and for hours run along the beach so near that Alice could see the surf thundering upon the reefs, and the dense, dark forests of cedar

and mahogany stretching inland for miles towards the faint blue haze which marked the distant peaks of the Cordillera.

As they approached the equator the heat became more intense, but the compressors of the liquid air plant always kept the temperature below decks cool and inviting, while the speed at which the *Sabine* travelled always insinuated a breeze beneath the awnings on deck.

Alice kept to her cabin until Craig, seeing that she was determined to avoid him, buried himself in his laboratory and work rooms for long hours, in order to allow her the freedom of the deck undisturbed. Occasionally at night he would come up, listless and heavy-eyed from his work, to find her leaning over the rail gazing wistfully through the darkness towards the distant coast, but at the first sound of his approach she would glide like a spectre along the opposite side of the deck and disappear down the companionway, leaving him with set teeth and clenched hands, rebellious, impotent, helpless.

A hundred times he was on the point of turning the steering arrow northward and giving up the struggle; a hundred times he would set his teeth and return to his entrenchments.

Lying within the heavy hangings of her big white ivory bed, Alice far into the small hours of the night could hear his footsteps on the deck above going up and down, up and down, knocking, knocking, tapping at every door and portal of her heart, crying in their silent, inarticulate voices, "I love you! I love you! Let me in. I love you!"

Throwing aside the coverings she would lie for hours, stark and rigid, the alabaster whiteness of her form gleaming through the darkness like the sculptured marble of a reclining Aphrodite hidden away in the dusky recesses of some pagan temple, while above her the insistent, incessant footfalls went back and forth.

If, after hours of struggling with her problem, she pushed it aside and tried to interest herself in a book, before she knew it Craig's clean-cut, serious face and grave,

gray eyes would be looking up at her from out the printed page, and she would cast aside the volume in disgust and pace up and down the narrow space of her library like a caged wild thing.

“If he only had one human weakness I might love him,” her spirit would cry, “but how can I love a demigod, a superior being who thwarts me at every turn, and mocks me with his cold and cynical superiority? If I could only crush him, humiliate him, prove to him that in some one thing I was his equal, his superior, I might relent, but I cannot, I cannot, oh, I cannot!”

And Craig, catching sight of her white, drawn face and the smouldering fire in her big, brown, haunting eyes, as she glided through the saloon or flitted down the companionway, would curse himself and grow thin and haggard over his drawing board.

At times the sound of his violin would come faint and muffled to her ear from the inner recesses of his apartments; sobbing, wailing, commanding her, luring her with the spell of the East, seducing her ears with love

songs of the Levant, and the passion of Spanish lutes 'neath latticed windows, drawing the awakening soul out of her with its swaying, sensuous appeal, drawing, drawing, ever drawing, until, springing up, she would thrust her fingers into her ears and fly to the farthest recesses of her grotto, throwing her arms around its basalt columns, as if she feared that yearning cry would draw her bodily even from this inner sanctuary.

At times she would find her thoughts wandering through different episodes of her captivity. She recalled the first sweet stab of pain at her heart as she felt his burning lips pressed upon hers; the electric thrill, which had galvanized her body when his strong arms had closed around it that day on the island when he had carried her off a captive in the face of her would-be rescuers; that first dim consciousness of an impending something that morning when, beneath the sea, they had stood together in the gloom of the chart house, and her awakening spirit had taken alarm at — what she did not know.

Certainly no other man who had ever entered her life had made her feel these things.

Her old life back in New York, with its trivialities and inconsequentialities, its ostentatious setting and artificial emotions, seemed infinitely remote and unreal to her in the face of this vital, pulsating, primitive struggle she was making to retain her dominance and individuality.

The more she acknowledged Craig's power and influence over her, the more she hated him for it, and ever in her thoughts were running his words, "The strongest thing will win." Yes, in the end the strongest thing would win, but what was the strongest thing, love or pride? And Craig, buried in his laboratory, consuming great quantities of tobacco, grew pale and thin and hollow-eyed, and wondered when and how it would end.

CHAPTER XXIII

A DESPERATE STRUGGLE

ONE morning Alice ascended unexpectedly to the deck. It was at the hour when Craig was usually busy in the laboratory, and she wanted to get a breath of air before the heat of the day set in; but on reaching the chart house she saw that he had evidently been before her. Apparently he was engaged in one of his experiments, for one of the small spherical tide motors was lying on the fore-castle deck, together with the cable and heavy mushroom anchor which he used to attach them to the bottom. Of Craig himself she could see nothing, until raising her eyes she discovered him disporting himself in the water about a hundred yards ahead of the motionless yacht. He was evidently enjoying himself to the utmost, for he swam and dived and performed various tricks and evolutions with all the joyous abandon of a

schoolboy playing truant at his favourite swimming hole.

Alice stood for a moment within the shelter of the chart house watching him, and secretly exulting in the skill and grace with which he performed the most difficult feats. Unquestionably whatever he did, he did well. She had to admit that.

As she stood there watching she saw Craig suddenly raise himself high out of the water, and then, turning, strike out for the yacht with quick, powerful strokes which seemed to lift his body almost out of the heavier element. Looking beyond him Alice quickly discovered the cause of this sudden accession of haste. About four cables' lengths distant a dark triangular fin was cutting the water at an amazing rate of speed, and at times, as it sheered through the crest of a wave, she caught a glimpse of a long, shadowy, grayish body beneath it. It was the great white shark — *Carcharodon Carcharias* — that terror of the seas, that scourge of the open ocean, the most dangerous and most dreaded of all the pelagic carnivora.

Craig evidently knew his peril, for, with head and shoulders buried in the brine, he was devouring the yards which separated him from the *Sabine* with all the desperate energy of a man in deadly need of haste. The Australian crawl stroke is phenomenal in its speed, but human powers of aquatic locomotion are as nothing when matched against the powerful propelling caudal fin with which nature has equipped the larger members of the shark family.

Before Craig had covered half the distance which separated him from the yacht, the huge man-eater was upon him. Seeing that it was impossible to reach the gangway in time, Craig stopped swimming, and, treading water, turned to face his adversary, and Alice saw that he held in his teeth the long Japanese knife which had played such an important part in their early acquaintance. The excitement of the moment had drawn her from the chart house out upon the fore-castle deck, where, rigid with terror, she stood clinging to the rail and watching this death duel between the man and the fish.

The shark, having brought its quarry to bay, seemed in no hurry to attack, but circled around like a boxer, sizing up its adversary before opening hostilities. Craig, while constantly facing his opponent, took full advantage of all these feints and circlings to lessen the distance which separated him from the gangway ladder. The shark, in spite of its threatening and formidable appearance, seemed to hesitate to attack. Apparently it was uncertain as to what manner of mammal it was that had so rashly invaded its domain. Its hesitation was soon over, however, and with a sweep of its tail, it darted in, at the same time turning on its side to expose its triple row of cruel serrated teeth.

As the shark swept down on him, Craig raised his body out of the water, at the same time throwing himself to one side, and as the huge bulk of the fish surged by him, the knife flashed. In an instant the sea was stained with a thin but ever-widening streak of crimson. With a tremendous sweep of its tail, the shark sheered off and circled again to the attack, while Craig seized upon the

momentary diversion to shorten his distance from the gangway. Again the two faced each other, and again, after a moment of feinting, the shark dashed in to finish its prey; but Craig, throwing his arms over his head, sank beneath the surface, and as the yellowish white mass of the belly passed over him, the dagger again drank deep. The wound was not an immediately fatal one, however, and lashing the water into foam, the great fish circled and charged once more. For the third time Craig faced it resolutely, but Alice could see that he was breathing hard, and was evidently much spent by the tremendous exertions he had been making.

Maddened by the pain of its wounds and enraged at being twice foiled of its prey, the shark wasted no time in preliminaries. With its cruel jaws open, and its wicked little eyes glowing with hate and fury, it bore down upon its weakened adversary as if it would overwhelm him by sheer weight and bulk. Craig watched it narrowly, pale but determined. As it turned on its side, he suddenly leaned forward and struck with

all his might at the soft, round spot just back of the gill openings, at the same time throwing his body to one side; but either he had miscalculated the distance, or his failing strength had not been equal to the task. Alice heard the terrible triple-armed jaws close with a snap, and, in an instant, the man's thigh was torn open from hip to knee, while the knife, catching in the hard, bony substance of the jaw, was twisted from his grasp and sank to the bottom.

The evolutions of the combatants had by this time transferred the field of action to a point directly under the bows of the *Sabine*. Craig, weakened, wounded and disarmed, and seeing that his only chance of escape lay in reaching the gangway ladder before the fish could renew the attack, was swimming desperately with the remainder of his strength along the side of the yacht directly beneath her. The shark seemed to know that at last its prey was completely at its mercy. Circling leisurely and swimming up behind, it opened its jaws for the final snap which would divide its victim's body as

easily as a minnow is severed in the jaws of a pike.

It was at this critical instant that the tension of excitement and terror which had held Alice a silent, rigid spectator of the battle suddenly snapped. From a petrified and passive onlooker she at once became a vigorous, desperate actor in the scene. With an accession of strength utterly impossible to her under ordinary conditions, she seized the great weight of the mushroom anchor, and hurled it over the side just as Craig turned his head and smiled up at her a last white-lipped good-bye.

Her aim must have been certainly directed by Providence, for, just as the cruel jaws were about to close, the descending mass struck the shark on the skull just back of the eyes, forcing its head down into the water and momentarily stunning it. Before it could recover itself, Craig, covered with blood, had reached the ladder, dragged himself to the deck and dropped unconscious at her feet.

♦



CHAPTER XXIV

IN THE WATCHES OF THE NIGHT

IN the days that followed Alice never ceased to bless the wisdom and foresight which had caused her father to prescribe for her a course of nursing in the emergency ward of the great hospital of the Magdalene. When she beheld Craig lying inert and apparently lifeless at her feet, the blood pouring from the innumerable wounds in his torn and lacerated thigh, her first impulse was the purely feminine one to swoon and sink into a heap, but the necessity for immediate action steeled her nerves against the insidious weakness of her sex, and the moment of crisis found the Huntington spirit, that grim, uncompromising determination to do or die, which was ingrained in her nature, in arms, and ready to grapple with the emergency.

Running below to the medicine cabinet,

she quickly returned with lint, bandages and instruments. First cutting away the light bathing suit which Craig wore, she hurriedly applied a tourniquet to the main artery to check the bleeding, then, washing out the wounds carefully with an antiseptic solution, which she had hurriedly prepared, she drew together the jagged edges of the wounds with quick, deft stitches. The lacerations were not deep, the jaws having barely grazed the limb, but the razor-edged, triangular teeth had torn and mutilated the flesh in a horrible manner, and the loss of blood had been great.

Having done all she could to close the openings, Alice dressed the wounds, wrapping layer upon layer of linen bandages tightly around them, turning the rolls in her hand, as she had been taught, to make the folds lie close and even. Her next task was to get Craig below and into his berth. Exerting her superb young strength to the utmost, she dragged him into the chart house and down the stairs, and at last succeeded in getting him into the simple, white iron cot

he was accustomed to sleep in, which Alice, in spite of her distress and anxiety, could not but mentally contrast with the luxurious bed on which she was accustomed to repose.

Making her patient as comfortable as possible, Alice next ascended to the deck to note the position of the yacht. The shark, the cause of all the trouble, she found floating on its back alongside, two long, gaping wounds in its belly showing the vents through which its tremendous vitality had at last ebbed away.

The *Sabine* was lying quietly in the trough of the long swells, the gyrostats steadying her against the rolling motion. The knob of the speed controller was in the neutral notch, but on sliding it back along the bar the yacht failed to respond. Craig, before going overboard, had evidently taken the precaution to disconnect the controlling mechanism, at some point which she could not discover. She touched the button which illuminated the telautographic chart, and saw that the luminous pointer indicated their position to be approximately some two hundred miles

northeast of the mouth of the Amazon. As the motive power was evidently crippled beyond her ability to repair, there was nothing she could do but let the yacht drift at the mercy of the winds and waves. As long as the sea remained calm they were in no immediate danger, but if it should come on to blow, Alice wondered vaguely what would become of them. Happily the weather was fair and showed every indication of remaining so.

On returning below, Alice found that Craig had recovered consciousness. He was evidently suffering severely from the pain of his injuries, for the beads of moisture were standing out thickly upon his forehead, and his lips were white and drawn. He seemed not to recognize her, but stared intently up at the ceiling with wrinkled brows, as if absorbed in the solution of some intricate mental problem, and there was a wild, unnatural gleam in his eyes that Alice did not like. Smoothing his pillow with a deftness of touch which is the exclusive property of the loving woman, and which even the

trained nurse cannot hope to acquire, she made a hasty examination of the bandages to see if the bleeding had been effectually checked, and then went forward into the galley to prepare some nourishment for her patient. She was interrupted in this task by the sound of the cathedral bells of the detector, and on going on deck found that one of the submarine torpedoes, which constituted their supply train and linked them to civilization, was floating alongside.

Starting the motor which operated the electric crane, she soon had the long, polished cylinder hoisted on board and lowered through the sliding hatch into the storeroom, as she had seen Craig do many times before. On opening it she found several freshly killed chickens in the refrigerating compartment. These were just what she needed, and she soon had two of them over one of the electric stoves, reducing them to a thick and nutritious jelly.

On returning to her patient after completing this task, she found a decided change for the worse. Craig was in a high fever, toss-

ing and turning and muttering incoherently to himself, and seemed to be absolutely unconscious of his surroundings.

Alice was seriously alarmed. To be imprisoned upon a disabled craft in the middle of the ocean with, as sole companion, a man gripped in the throes of fever and delirium, was a prospect to daunt even the stoutest heart. The sole expedient her training suggested was to allay the pain by a hypodermic injection of morphine. While the drug was working she secured some stout strips of canvas from the storeroom. These she eyeleted and fitted with stout rings, and when they were securely laced to Craig's arms above the elbow, and to his ankles, and straps run through them down to the side rods of the bed, where she could tighten them at need, she felt relieved and more prepared to meet whatever emergency might arise.

As night approached Craig's fever and delirium increased, and by the time the effects of the morphine had worn off, he was tugging and straining at his bonds, while the

little red heat devils danced their mad mazurkas through his beclouded brain. At times he would straighten up to the limits of his straps, and address her in words of the most burning, passionate love, only to trail off into a jumble of formulas, stresses, strains, bending moments, spherical harmonics, and all the unintelligible jargon of higher mathematics. At one moment he would be fighting desperately for her single-handed against bands of cutthroats and pirates, and in the next he would be struggling through the frost-bound Labrador wilds, drawn by the lure of a siren sound that spelled power, power, unlimited power.

He went over the story of her abduction, and the motives that led up to it, in completeness and detail, setting forth each thing in its order as a tale that had to be told; and Alice, as she listened, gained a new and illuminating insight into the tremendous power of the passion she was combating.

During his quieter moments she would readjust his bandages and take his temperature. Hour after hour she sat there, her

great, grave eyes looking out of a pallid, passive face, watching, watching, while the slender thread of mercury in the clinical thermometer climbed higher and higher, and the dusky shadows from her little flickering night lamp danced a solemn and stately saraband upon wall and ceiling. One hundred, one hundred and two, one hundred and four, one hundred and five! Would the climbing column of mercury never stop!

Boris came and laid his great head upon the coverlet, and looked long and earnestly into the face of his friend; then stretched his keen nose towards the ceiling, and Alice bated her breath, and pressed her hands convulsively to her bosom, in terror, lest he should give the long-drawn death howl.

The night wind moaned and sobbed and whimpered through one of the partly opened portholes, speaking to her of partings and of the bitterness of death, until she rose and closed it to shut out the doleful and depressing sound.

Craig, in his ramblings, carried her through every phase and incident of their

acquaintance, touching and illuminating some of its more obscure and incomprehensible phases with a vividness and clarity impossible to a mind not lifted out of itself by some supreme crisis.

Alice's hospital training had taught her what to expect from a man in delirium, and she had steeled herself to hear what no woman should ever hear, least of all from the lips of the man in whose keeping her future fate and happiness might some day lie: but no word came from those parched and feverish lips which could wound the susceptibilities of even the most delicate. At times he would sink into long periods of quiescent lethargy, during which no sound would be heard but the faint hum of the gyrostats, and the gentle lapping of the waves against the hull. Then the tortured brain would again take up the thread of its vague and shadowy wanderings, circling always around the one eternal problem, touching on it with a delicacy at times almost womanly, at others with a fire and vigour essentially masculine.

Once, after a long period of silence, he suddenly straightened up to the limits of his bonds, and looking at her gravely, said, in a tone of profound and calm conviction, — “ Miss Huntington, you must marry me, you really must, because — the sine of the angle A, B, D is equal to the square root of A, C, B over X , and because, — but I have forgotten the rest of the formula — no, I haven’t — because — because, I love you! ”

He was quiet for a moment contemplating this achievement; then he went on slowly: — “ Yes, I love you more than my life, more than my soul, more than anything or everything in the universe. I love you with every throb of my heart — with every drop of my blood — ” He interrupted himself with a wild, hysterical outburst of laughter — “ With every drop of my blood. Ha! ha! ha! I haven’t any blood; Carcharodon Carcharias drank it all, all, to the last and uttermost drop. No,” and the voice sank again, “ that’s a lie, he didn’t; he turned it into fire. I can feel it burning — burning — burning.” The trailing voice suddenly

took on energy and insistence. "They're catching us! They're catching us, I tell you! Why don't you do something?"

Towards morning he dropped off into a troubled and intermittent sleep, and Alice, after vainly striving to fight off her weariness, spread a steamer rug on the floor beside the cot, and, throwing herself down upon it, sank into the oblivion of utter physical and mental exhaustion.

For three days Craig wandered and struggled in the tangled and shadowy labyrinths of delirium. On the morning of the fourth, as she leaned over his pallet, Alice saw the light of returning reason enthroned in the hollow, sunken eyes which looked up into her own. For one long moment he gazed into that dark Madonna-like face bending over him, framed in a wondrous mass of heavy, unconfined tresses, and then, with a groan which was almost a sob, and which seemed to be wrung from the uttermost depths of his soul, that terrible cry of anguish of the strong spirit beaten down, he turned and buried his face in the pillow.



CHAPTER XXV

THE STRONGEST THING

CRAIG's convalescence was unusually slow; his wounds healed rapidly, it is true, and the splendid vitality of his body quickly returned, but his spirit seemed unaccountably crushed and broken. The long mental strain which he had endured previous to the accident had evidently left a permanent mark. He seldom spoke, confining himself when he did so to brief directions in regard to the management of the yacht.

Alice tried to draw him out and arouse his interest, but without avail. He accepted her ministrations with a gratitude which he tried to express by looks, but which he never put into words.

A week after the accident he was so far recovered as to be able to leave his cot and move slowly about his cabin, helping himself

by means of the tables and chairs. The following morning Alice found him in the chart house contemplating the binnacle with an expression of profound and melancholy satisfaction. Glancing at the compass card she saw that the steering arrow for the first time in many weeks was pointing north. A sudden and unaccountable trembling seized her. To hide it she crossed the room and stood looking out of one of the windows.

Alice felt that Craig should open the conversation, if there was to be one, but he said nothing. She endured the silence as long as she could, and then, glancing over her shoulder with an assumption of indifference, said: "You are feeling better this morning."

"Much better, thank you."

There was a pause.

"You don't ask how *I* am feeling."

"It is not necessary. No one could look at you and imagine you in other than the best of health."

"So you *have* looked at me. One might be pardoned for supposing that you were

entirely absorbed in the study of that binnacle."

"Yes. I *have* looked at you."

A pause.

"And you think I look well?"

"Exceedingly well."

Another pause.

"One might perhaps expect to feel a little tired after — after —"

"Yes. One might expect to feel very tired; in fact, one might expect to feel — almost anything."

Alice stood nervously picking to pieces a flower which she had unconsciously taken from the holder in front of the binnacle.

"Upon my word, Mr. Craig, you are a most inspiring companion. One would almost think you had been appointed chief mourner at a funeral."

"I have."

"You have! Whose?"

"My own."

"Well, you might at least spare me all these lugubrious trappings of woe. I always thought that when a real hero died

he just died, without saying anything about it."

"Well, I haven't said anything about it — neither do I claim to be what you would call a real hero."

"You may not have said anything about it, but you have looked it. One would think that after all I have gone through I might expect to be treated with a little consideration."

"Miss Huntington," interrupted Craig gravely, "I am not going to try to thank you for what you have done —"

"You haven't —"

"There are some obligations so overwhelming, so crushing, some debts so vast and unliquidatable that the debtor feels at once the fundamental impossibility of ever discharging them. Miss Huntington, we are headed north. We are bound for New York."

"New York!" echoed Alice faintly. "But — why? I don't understand. I thought you were going to explore the Sargasso."

“Fate has changed the plans. I have lost. It only remains for me to pay the penalty. Ever since I first beheld you I have loved you, loved you with all the strength and intensity of my nature. For three long years you have been my inspiration, my ideal, my religion. I have carried your image into the fetid swamps and tangled forests of the tropics, over the barren plains and bitter desolation of the north. I have sought success; I have striven to achieve, only that I might lay the fruits of my victories at your feet, that I might be worthy to stand before you and look into your eyes. When I returned to New York last fall and learned that you were engaged to the Duke of Buckminster, I was frantic with despair. I could not work. I could not eat. I could not sleep. I could not concentrate my mind on anything. Night after night I would walk the streets, my brain in a turmoil, my mind saying over and over again, — ‘It cannot be; it must not be.’ If your fiance had been any part of a man I could have borne it, but that man, no! It was too horrible;

I knew him. It seemed like a sacrilege, sacrifice of the innocents, and all I could do was to wander up and down in the darkness before your home, cursing myself and crying in my soul, — 'It must not be!'

"From that condition in a nature like mine the transition to, — It shall not be, is short and decisive. My associates thought I was suffering from a nervous breakdown, and begged me to give up and take this trip. That suggested the idea — the rest followed with the inevitableness of fate. I felt that if I could get you away, if I could remove you from the artificial environment in which you were placed, I could win you. I see now that I was mistaken; I have lost, and it only remains for me to pay the penalty."

"I believe you said that before."

"Did I?" replied Craig wearily.

"Yes."

"Well, repetition was unnecessary; the fact is sufficiently obvious."

"So you are taking me back to New York," resumed Alice meditatively, after another long pause.

"Yes."

"It will seem strange to be back in New York again after all these weeks."

Craig evidently had nothing to offer to this last observation.

"I wonder what they will do to you?" she went on in a calmly contemplative tone.

"Do they put such persons in Sing Sing or Matteawan?"

"I don't know. I suppose Matteawan would be the more appropriate."

"It will seem odd to think of a man one has been compelled to associate with for weeks, shut up in a cell among convicts, but then I suppose you can easily get away in the *Sabine*."

"I have not the slightest desire to do so. What would I want to get away for?"

"Why, to continue your work 'for the good of humanity,'" replied Alice maliciously.

She had at last reduced her captor to a state of abject and suffering servitude, and with the relentless, unthinking cruelty of her sex she intended to take full advantage of it.

"I am afraid my interest in the good of humanity is not as keen as it was. One cannot strive for the happiness of others if he is not happy himself."

"At all events you will be better off in your cell than I shall be. At least you will not have to meet people. Everywhere I go I shall feel myself the subject of whispered conversations and curious glances. What a choice morsel it will be for the gossiping dowagers and sour chaperones. I can hear them rolling it under their tongues now. 'Oh, yes, she is the Miss Huntington that was carried off on a yacht, and do you know, she was gone over ten weeks, and Heaven only knows where they were or what they were doing.'"

"Don't!" protested Craig whitely.

"Yes," went on Alice relentlessly, "I shall have to wear a sort of a society bargain counter tag, '98c. marked down from \$1.40, only slightly damaged, almost as good as new.' Perhaps after years,—after the affair has blown over and been forgotten, I may find some man who will be willing to

marry me for my money, but the whispers and the wise looks will always follow me wherever I go."

"Don't! Don't!" exclaimed Craig hoarsely, his white face writhing with pain.

"Don't! Why not? It's true and you know it. Oh, you men, you think you suffer; you don't know how to suffer. It takes a woman to suffer, and it takes a man to show her how."

"You are certainly showing *me* how."

"Oh, well, I fancy I shall stand it somehow," went on Alice, with a resumption of her indifferent manner. "One can live down almost anything, you know — in time."

She saw that Craig in his weakened condition was on the verge of a physical collapse, and while she wanted to torture him with the exquisite refinement of cruelty which a woman can show only to the man she most loves, she did not wish to carry her diversion too far.

"What I don't understand, —" she remarked after a while, leading back to the attack along a new line of approach, "what

I don't understand is, how you could have expected to win any woman in this way."

"I know it was impossible, I can see it all now, and yet — there have been times when — when I thought that — I had."

"You thought that you had! Oh, most modest of men! And when was that, pray?" She placed her hands upon the table, and leaned towards him provokingly; and Craig, his hungry eyes devouring the symmetry and perfection of her, grew sick with hopeless, helpless despair.

Suddenly a look of terror wiped the perverse, provoking smile from her face, leaving it ashen. Flying fingers clutched swiftly at the bosom of the loose morning gown she had been in the habit of wearing during Craig's illness. Consternation! Dismay! She had missed it! Her eyes grew big with fright. Both hands delved wildly, frantically, in the voluminous folds of her skirt, but — too late. There was a faint thud, as of some hard substance striking the deck, followed by a tinkling, metallic clatter.

Craig saw the object and reached for it

under the table, but Alice was before him. She straightened up swiftly, breathless, her body thrilling from the momentary contact of their fingers. Against her wildly palpitating heart was pressed the signet of the royal Isabella, while a bit of fine gold chain with a broken clasp at the end, dangled from between her fingers.

"ALICE!" Craig's voice, vibrant with wonder, surprise and incredulity, rang out like the peal of a Yuletide bell.

"Alice!" In three strides he had circumnavigated the table which separated them, but she had fled.

Relentlessly he pursued her along the deck, until at the very stern, breathless, dishevelled, defiant, she turned and faced him.

"You have worn that ring all this time."

"No."

"Alice!"

"No! no! It is not so. Go away! Don't touch me!"

"Alice!" commandingly. "Tell me."

The strong arms, strong with the strength

of a supreme joy, closed slowly around her. Gently, but resistlessly, she was drawn within the circle of that close embrace, and then, as the last spark of her dying resistance was going out, the blackening embers blazed up in one last fierce flame. Suddenly the yielding, pliant form stiffened, the dusky, drooping head was flung back, and in the eyes which looked into his the old light of battle flamed. Pushing herself violently from him, she cried:

“No! no! Let me go! I hate you!”

But the stout arms did not relax. The gray eyes, dancing with myriad lights of joy, would not be denied. Slowly the brown ones fell before them. Swiftly the surging colour mantled brow and cheek. Like the folding of a gull's wing the tense young form relaxed. The remainder of her defiance was whispered into the collar of his soft, flannel shirt,

“I hate you! — but — I love you, too!”

Above them arched a sky of purest turquoise; around them stretched the ocean, a vast and flawless matrix of uncut sapphire,

and in their hearts were resounding the mighty strains of that old, old anthem, old as the earth, imperishable as immortality, the wonderful anthem of love.

And here, in the dawn of earth's sweetest ecstasy, let us leave them.

In all rich lives, lives that are worth the living, the dominant chord is love, and always, always and inevitably, the strongest thing will win.

THE END.

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